

LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

OCTOBER, 1899



LOVE ACROSS THE LINES

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PART I.

I.

DOCTOR FRANCIS BRODNAR rapidly paced the richly carpeted floor of his spacious parlor office, his brow clouded and his massive jaws clenched. His countenance, usually serene and trust-inspiring, had for the moment lost its kindness, and was forbidding almost to repulsiveness. A patient, viewing him from the operating-table, would, it is likely, unless possessed of superior nerve, have succumbed to heart-failure; at best he would have demanded another appointment; for by some atavic reversion the good Doctor had apparently returned to savagery of a virulent type. When he paused abruptly before the clock and suffered his jaws to relax, the spectacular results were even worse. He glared vindictively at the placid timepiece and gnawed fiercely his heavy mustache.

"Four o'clock! four o'clock!" he exclaimed, "and this is her last day!" The sentence ended in something like a groan.

"Well," replied a voice near at hand, "there must be last days for everybody and everything." The voice was full and musical, with a shading of melancholy. The speaker stood in the door-way, hat and cane in hand. "If this were my last day of bachelorhood, I don't think I could have stated it so woefully, nor have put as much despair into the sentence. How are you, Frank? Why, what is the matter?" he continued, entering the room slowly as the other remained motion-

less, gazing silently towards him. "Don't know me? Sorry to see me? You are glaring!"

"Dick Somers!" The name burst from the Doctor's lips, and he rushed on his visitor, seizing and wringing the proffered hand. Again he stopped, his whole soul in his face and eyes.

"Well," said Somers cheerfully, "what is on your mind, old man? Five years is a long time and Paris was a gay place; but five years and Richmond are not enough, surely, to effect such a change as this! And I shall have use again for that hand, perhaps, bones and all, so——"

"The last days of your bachelorhood,—you said the last days of your bachelorhood, did you not? Then you are still a bachelor, Dick?"

"Well, yes," and Somers smiled wistfully into his friend's face. "The same old Brodnar," he continued, "headlong, enthusiastic, impetuous! What new scheme is afoot now? Do you want to offer me up on the altar of matrimony? If so, I draw the line there. Why, confound it! man, what is the matter with you?" he added; for the other, still retaining his hand, continued to regard him in deep thought.

"Sit down," said the Doctor, drawing him towards a chair,—*"sit down."* And Somers perforce accepted the seat. "Dick,"—and the professional man stood over him,—*"I will welcome you formally to-morrow, but to-day you are the most welcome man on earth. I suppose I am headlong, enthusiastic, and impulsive, but I am true, am I not?—true to my friends?"*

"True? As truth itself, old fellow." And Somers, who had taken a cigar from a box on the table by his side, suspended the lighted match over the weed as he looked up. "Anybody been casting a doubt on that point?"

"And honorable?"

"As honor!"

"You would take my word unsupported for any amount, would you not?"

Somers looked affectionately into the flushed, eager face above him and grew serious. "I would take your word, Frank, against the world, except in one event——"

"And that?"

"Well, if you speak disparagingly of yourself, Frank." Their hands met impulsively.

"Dick, don't laugh at me or think me out of my senses, but tell me seriously,—is there any reason why you may not be married to-night?" Somers started to rise, a queer look upon his face.

"Sit down," said the Doctor, with both hands on his shoulders. "Answer me frankly."

"Heavens! man, are you in your right senses?—but yes, this is only the same old Brodnar."

"You do not answer, Dick. You are treating me lightly, and I am desperately in earnest."

"Well, then, old fellow, I will answer you seriously. There is no reason on God's earth why I may not marry to-night. No heart will break, no trust be shattered, no one will care. Yes, one—my mother." He lifted his fine face towards his friend. It wore again the characteristic half-wistful, half-mocking smile.

"You would not care, either, Dick? Not if by marrying you obliged a friend who loves you? Not if by marrying you enabled him to defeat a piece of villany planned against the life and welfare of one of his dear friends? Not if it defeated a cowardly enemy? Oh, don't you see my whole soul is in this matter?" The Doctor resumed his agitated pacing.

"Wouldn't it be best for me to kill him—in some genteel way,—say——"

"No; killing is still a crime, but matrimony isn't,—though often more immoral. And killing would settle with but one, while matrimony wipes out the whole crowd."

"Which, unfortunately, includes me, if I guess well;—but there you go again, Frank! Sit down, and I will be serious. Only—you will let me inquire into the details of this marriage which you have evidently planned for me;—a man may inquire about his own marriage, may he not?" Somers's voice was now plaintive. The Doctor did not answer on the moment, but walked to the window and gazed gloomily into the blue spring skies towards which the budding trees of the old Capitol were lifting their arms in welcome.

"Of course, it is absurd, Dick," he said, coming back, "and is obliged to strike you so; but, do you know, I believe that friendship is the one undying bond of our race. All others have their limitations,—even love of man and woman burns itself out. I believe that somewhere between men such a friendship as this exists: to love where another loves instantly and forever; to hate where he hates blindly and implacably; to hold his honor higher and sweeter than life, his happiness above one's own; to feel this holy affection so strong that it permeates every quality of mind and body, and makes us in truth that which we believe our friend to be. In such a friendship, Dick, self perishes. We look into the eyes of our friend and say 'Command!' We do not question; we trust implicitly, blindly; and if we err——"

"Life is black forever!" Somers had arisen, and, taking his friend's hand, was regarding with affection his flushed face. "That is Frank Brodnar indeed," he continued. "You mean it, my dear fellow; and I am satisfied that if after five years of separation I should enter this room and say, 'My boy, if you have no previous engagement and the way is clear, you will do me a great kindness by stepping down the

street and letting me marry you out of hand to a friend who is being or has been victimized,'—wait! I am in earnest,—you would take up your hat, smooth your hair, and join me before I reached the street or you had remembered the madam and babies at home. But, my dear fellow, I haven't the ability to throw myself headlong into a plot. It is constitutional that I do not excite easily. I must find my way up to par by stages; while you, you were born above par. You may guess from my metaphor what I have been doing of late. But it doesn't follow that I never reach the point of high tension. Nor does it follow that I am a cold-blooded friend. A little sluggish blood sometimes saves a friendship. Sit down and tell me all about it."

"And that is just what I may not do." Somers studied the gloomy face a moment in silence.

"You may at least tell me what you would have me do, Frank."

"I would have you come here to-night, let me blindfold you, take you to a certain room in this city, have performed over you a ceremony which will unite you to a perfectly honorable woman, leave you there with her until dawn, when I shall bring you away. I would have you ask me no question now or hereafter touching this matter; have you regard this woman to-night as a holy charge and treat her with the reverence and respect you should yield to your dead sister; and never from this moment until the day comes when I may release you—and that may be near or far—would I have you seek to discover her name or place of living. By your marriage contract you obtain no rights whatever over the woman or her property,—I assure you she will claim nothing of you,—and when the time comes for her to ask an honorable divorce at your hands—a mere matter of a few years I think—you are to grant it openly and freely. More than this I may not tell you."

Somers had leaned forward upon the table and was looking with deep interest into the speaker's face.

"It sounds like an Elizabethan romance, or a chapter from 'Don Cæsar de Bazan.' I am approaching par." And then he added gravely, "You have not forgotten that my mother and yours were somehow cousins, and——"

"I have not. Nor have I forgotten that a friend's name and honor are sacred whether he is or is not of kindred blood. And I have not forgotten that the woman herself—this woman of whom I speak—confers an honor with her blind trust. There has been my chief difficulty, Dick. In these days it is hard to find a man into whose hands you may place a young woman and say to her, 'Trust him implicitly!'" Somers smiled slightly.

"My dear fellow, don't you see that it is you whom the woman will trust in this instance, not me? I am only to vindicate you."

"Then you consent?"

"Why, of course! I have no ties to hinder me; and I shall never marry with any serious intentions. As you know, my life chance passed from me when I laid down my commission in the army to become a wanderer. I am here to-day to sign for a small share in some property of my grandmother's, and to-morrow I shall be off again. I do not think I will be inconvenienced much by the fact that I shall leave a bride in Richmond whom I have never seen nor am apt to see; and since it helps you and your friend, why, I am positively happy over the affair. Fact is, Frank, I am about up to par in this matter now."

"You make me happy, Dick. True as steel always, but always—always—I wish, old fellow, I might find the missing note in your life."

"Satisfy my ambition, Frank, and you have found it. My people were of the army and navy. You remember Somers in Tripoli, and—but this is idle. When that damnable villain Holbin tempted me to embroil myself with the authorities in an act of insubordination the world was roseate——"

"Holbin,—Raymond Holbin?"

"Why, yes. Had you forgotten the circumstances? I used to rage over it enough in Paris, God knows. Pass the matches, please." Brodnar passed them and moved quickly to the rear of the speaker, lifting his right hand in excitement, his features working convulsively. "It did not help matters that they cashiered him for rascality and pusillanimity, for they had let me resign, and my application for reinstatement lies unacted upon still. Frank, there is the open grave in my life, and the missing note is silent within it." He wheeled his chair about and looked up into his friend's face. "You would help it if you could, I know; and bless you, my boy, for your sympathy. What was it you wanted me to do? Oh, yes, the marriage. Let us get back to that: Am I to make a toilet? but of course——"

"You will do as you are. It will be in the dark. But, Dick, at this moment, for the first time, the full extent of your friendship dawns upon me and I see the generous heart beating away so faithfully in my behalf. Dick, there was a woman in the affair between you and Holbin; you have never told me of her and I don't ask you now, but if there is a sacrifice in this for you it is not too late——"

"Sacrifice? Lead on! I am in the hands of my friends. I am not the first to leap blindfolded into the sea of matrimony, nor shall I be the last. Life is a cycle and fools beget fools. Besides, I have in my religion some of the fatalism of the East: that which comes to us without our seeking and seemeth right to do, is generally the right thing to do. The falling cocoanut that breaks the sleeping robber's head feeds the starving pilgrim."

"Well said. And in this adventure, my friend, I take it that you

are the cocoanut. I am old-fashioned enough to believe in God, and with His help you may break a villain's head indeed."

"But I shall be satisfied if my own isn't broken. By the way, my wife should understand that if this ugly rupture between the South and North involves blows, she may hear of her husband bearing arms against her."

"Fiddlesticks! There has been more blood shed in my back office than you will see spilled between the North and South. The people on the streets and up yonder in the Capitol are temporarily insane. It will end in wind,—my name for oratory." Cheers in the street below, followed by the discharge of a cannon, shook the windows. A boy rushed past, crying an extra.

"What does he say?" asked Somers, as Brodnar, who stood near the window, lifted his face.

"Fort Sumter has surrendered!"

II.

RICHARD SOMERS reëntered the office of Dr. Brodnar as the clock was striking ten. He was in full evening dress and wore a white rose, a Lamarque, upon his lapel. As he stood drawing on his gloves, Brodnar regarded him with silent admiration. The straight military figure of good height looked taller than it had. There was no suggestion of heaviness at any point, but behind the perfect lines lay, as he knew, an amount of strength and nervous force that would with retraining rank their owner among the athletes. But fine as was the framework of the man and his physical development, there was in the face, shadowed at the moment by broad, down-drooping lashes and mustache, patrician elegance, native refinement, and innate nobility that commanded undivided attention. The slightly aquiline features were softened by arched and evenly matched brows and an expression indescribable by any other term than that invented by a Paris friend,—“the Somers smile.” One never appreciated the value of that smile until in some moment of emotion the face which wore it grew white and straight, and the level gaze of the man was encountered. Above a white, inclined forehead, hair almost black lay in waves, but so closely as to leave visible the outlines of the splendid head. Such was Richard Somers at twenty-eight, a man raved over by women, envied by men, known to but few.

“It is better this way,” he was saying of himself; “a man owes something to his family and his bride in the matter of dress, even though he is not to see or be seen. And he owes a great deal to himself. By the way, I assumed that I am not to be seen;—however, is that one of the questions I must not ask?”

“Your face is not to be seen, Dick, except in the dark,—dimly.

But I am glad, nevertheless, that you selected your dress suit; it does seem more in taste. By the way,—speaking of Raymond Holbin,—Dick, have you forgotten that he dated from this State in the army?—God knows where he was born. I see him occasionally in Richmond, and”—Brodnar paused and looked curiously on his companion—“have you ever been told that there is something not unlike in your personal appearance? Don’t be offended, old fellow, but, between you and me, there isn’t a more unprincipled rascal unhung.” Somers’s face flushed once and the smile left it. He replied with some constraint:

“I did not know that he ever favored Richmond with his presence. I did know, however, that he once lived in this State. His was a Presidential appointment. His mother years ago wielded considerable influence around Washington, especially among Senators. As to the likeness, it has been commented on before, and I once fought a boy at school for discovering the fact. Does he make Richmond his home?”

“Of late, yes. But I see that you are annoyed. My dear fellow, very ugly people may resemble very handsome ones. Shall we start?”

“I am ready.”

“This bandage,” said Brodnar, “seems to imply a doubt of you, Dick, but believe me it has its proper use. In the future, if accident should confront you with the—woman, neither of you will be embarrassed. She will, it is true, know your name, but unless she should look you up in days to come she will never see your face. Is that comfortable?—yes? Well, a moment and we are gone. Your hand, my friend, now, and your word of honor. You will not look on this woman’s face, nor seek in any way to discover from her, from me, or from anyone aught that I am seeking to conceal; under all circumstances you will yourself conceal from everyone the facts of this night’s business; and you accept the woman to whom we go as your wife with all the limitations I have outlined. I know that in your own heart you are resolved, but the honor of a woman is at stake, and you must promise me as man to man.”

“As man to man, then, and upon the honor of Richard Somers, I promise. Lead on!” The chance passer-by who saw a blindfolded man led from the elegant apartments of Dr. Francis Brodnar was not surprised. The explanation was easy. But Somers himself was distinctly surprised at the length of the ride and the number of corners turned. It seemed to him that the carriage traversed more than once the same road, for in spite of himself he could not but take notice of such things. Dr. Brodnar desisted the drift of his thoughts.

“For a man to note the direction of a journey,” he said, “is a natural, an almost automatic, action of the brain-cells—an inheritance from both animal and human ancestry. Therefore, Dick, if I have sought to confuse you by my queer route, it is only through distrust

of the original and savage Somers, and to save all parties embarrassment. I trust few people. Here we are at last." Dismounting, he led his companion on a pavement, through a narrow gateway, the gate of which he unlocked, along a gravel walk with shrubbery on both sides for about sixty paces, up two stone steps to a door that had neither bell nor knocker, and into a woman's room.

How weak is human invention. Richard Somers gathered these facts without mental effort from small signs. The footfall upon the pavement, the search for the key, the clicking lock, the crowding, the gravel under foot, the touch of shrubbery, two steps at the door, and the indefinable air of every lady's room,—the faint, blended odor of powders, toilet waters, and pressed flowers. That it was the room of a refined woman he was sure in advance. Had he not been, there was the deep carpet into which his feet sank noiselessly.

And it was plain that he had come into a garden from a side-street, since no residence would have opened from a woman's room into a walk that led directly to a main street.

Here, then, was a woman who lived upon a first floor with a private garden at her disposal. He had heard the gentle plashing of water outside; there was a fountain in this garden. On the morrow he had but to walk the city until he found the premises, if he would. So much for the secrecy of his friend Brodnar!

By this time Richard Somers was a deeply interested man. Despite his resolution to carry off the affair lightly, he began to feel the presence of something like a tragedy. Where was the woman who was to make use of him blindly and go through the form of a marriage? Dimly at first, perhaps as a matter of logic, he was conscious that she was in the room and near him. Then without more reason he became certain of it. The room was not dark, for he felt light upon his bandaged eyes. Instinctively he stretched out his hand.

Then there was laid within it another as soft as silken velvet and small and tremulous. The touch thrilled him from head to foot; it was the hand of a young woman,—the timidity belonged to girlhood,—and instantly a deep sympathy moved him. It was indeed an urgent cause that forced her into this situation—forced her, because now she was softly crying, and her emotion shook the little hand. Instantly his own hand closed above hers.

"Be not afraid, my child," he said; "all will be well." His voice, low and sympathetic, was the first to break the silence of that room. The girl ceased crying and her hand lay quiet within his own. Then the Doctor spoke in a whisper:

"We are ready," he said to a third person; "make the ceremony as brief as possible." The other began:

"Richard Somers, do you take this woman to thy wedded wife, to

live together after God's holy ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?"

There was silence, and then Richard Somers said gravely: "I take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife; and I shall comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health, to the best of my ability, as long as I shall continue to be her wedded husband. Is that sufficient, sir, to answer all legal requirements?"

"That is sufficient," said the unknown speaker. "Frances, wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband——"

"To honor him at all times and in all hours while life shall last?" said Somers, interrupting. "I ask no more, no less."

Then upon his hearing fell a clear, musical voice, flawless as the note of a dove, plaintive as the wind-harp of the pines:

"Yes," it said, "to honor him at all times and in all hours while life shall last, whether in the days to come we meet again or we meet no more." He lifted his head quickly, his hand closed impulsively over hers, and a cry trembled upon his lips.

"That voice!" he said, deeply affected. "I have heard—but no!"—his chin sank upon his breast—"it cannot be." He caught the words of the unknown speaker beginning the invocation.

"No! no!" he cried almost fiercely, "it is a sacrilege!"

"Then," said the speaker, "it is sufficient to say that under authority vested in me by the State of Virginia I pronounce you man and wife." Somers stood silent and depressed. There was a whispered consultation; the inner door opened softly and someone passed out.

The scene and circumstances had powerfully affected the Doctor.

"There were difficulties I had not foreseen," he said gravely, "but you have safely passed them, my friends. And now I must leave you. Dick, I have placed in your hands the honor of a woman,—and my own. I will return for you before it is light. Remember! The gas is now extinguished and you may remove the bandage." He drew the girl towards him tenderly. "You may trust him implicitly. For the rest, all is now safe. Good-night, and God bless you both." He laid his hand reverently upon the girl's head, clasped his friend's hand, and would have passed out, but the hand he clasped restrained him, and Somers spoke feelingly as he drew him aside:

"Is this necessary—this remaining? Think how——"

"Absolutely! I read a decision last week, and I must have a marriage that will stand the test of the highest court."

"You read a decision? Are you not acting under advice of your lawyers?"

"Lawyers be hanged! I know Virginia law. A simple acknow-

ledgment before a witness, with this addition, fixes everything. Don't sulk now, Dick; it won't be long."

"I was not thinking of myself," said Somers. "Good-night." He stood a moment in thought, then turned to his companion. In the darkened but not dark room he saw a slender, girlish figure near him, the face bent forward and hidden in her hands. "Come," he said cheerfully, "let us sit down and talk it all over. It is true we are married, but that is no reason why we shouldn't be friends, I suppose. If you will find me a chair, I am sure you will confer a great favor. By the way, what shall I call you? 'Madam' or 'Mrs. Somers' sounds too awfully formal. Shall I say——"

"Call me Frances," she said simply. She understood without analyzing that he was trying to make it easier for her, and was grateful.

"Frances! What a beautiful name! I like it already because it is the feminine of Francis. Yes, the arm-chair will do, and I shall sit here by the table. And you? Oh, I seem to see you snug in the rocker in front. This I suppose is the proper arrangement for a family party when the meter isn't working; but I know very little about it. I never was married before, and I suppose you are equally in the dark." It made him happy to hear her friendly little laugh, even though it was instantly checked.

"By the way," he continued, "do you know anything of me? I am to ask no questions concerning you, but I suppose we may talk about me, may we not?"

"I know that you are a friend of Dr. Brodnar, and what he has told me. You are a stranger in Richmond and a gentleman. But I would have known that you are a gentleman anyway."

"Thank you, Miss Frances, that was nicely said."

"Frances!"

"Miss Frances!" he insisted.

"I am sorry," said the girl after a moment's silence, "but if you wish, let it remain that way."

"But I am curious to know how it was that you so quickly decided in my favor the question of gentility."

"My mother told me, when I was little, that any man in whose presence a girl or a child feels at ease is a gentleman at heart, and somehow I trusted in you from the moment you spoke. But Dr. Brodnar told me——"

"Well?"

"Told me such beautiful things,—stories of your life; I seemed to feel, sir, that I had known you always."

"And what has Brodnar been saying of me?—I can blush unseen."

"He told me you were brave——"

"Most men are. And at times all animals."

"That you loved flowers, birds, horses, children, and old people——"

"Objects that can't get away from me. Go on."

"That you are generous to a fault——"

"Especially my own,—or his."

"And that no woman on God's green earth, those were his words, ever appealed to you for help in vain. He told me that once he saw you get out of your carriage in Paris in your evening suit, pick up a dreadful old drunken woman who had fallen, and carry her to a house of refuge,—and, oh, sir, you did it because you said the noblest, the most sacred image on earth to a man should be a woman's form, the form like unto that of his mother,—too sacred for the laughter and jeers of a city's idlers——"

"I endorse the sentiment, whosoever it is. But what a sad gossip Brodnar is!"

"But you did do this, didn't you?"

"Would it please you to think that I did?"

"Would it! Why, sir, it was that that made me trust you!"

"Trust me? You were crying!"

"Because,—because,—this is a most strange position for you to find me in, Mr. Somers. I thought that I wouldn't care: and I did not, until you came. But I did then. And that is why I cried. Somehow, I felt that in spite of all at stake, it ought not to have happened this way."

"I understand. But in my estimation, my child, you have sacrificed nothing."

"You do not think so,—but—but——" He took up the thought.

"But you are grieved because you are saying, 'Now here is a gentleman who, I have suddenly discovered, I wish to respect me for myself, and as a refined, modest girl; and what must he think of one who is willing to be locked up here in a room with him all night!'—the girl caught her breath and half rose from her chair—'and for what? I cannot even tell him. I am bound not to tell him. I must sit by and see him sacrifice himself to friendship!'"

"Oh, sir, do you think——" She bent forward suddenly and, hiding her face in her hands, rested them upon his knees. He placed his own hand lightly upon her head and wondered if it were treason to have discovered that her hair was a mass of curls and clustering ringlets.

"That is only what *you* were saying to yourself, not what *I* am thinking. When I called you 'child' I absolved you from all the crimes of womanhood. There are many actions that flow naturally from childish hearts which carry not the slightest flavor of immodesty; and yet a woman may not copy them. So in this, my young friend,"

"Ah, you do not say 'my child' now!"

"No, you have passed into womanhood with the consciousness of this error. I say error, because it is a situation that you should not have been placed in,—no, not to save human life,—not even to save your own: for the unscarred whiteness of a woman's soul is the priceless pearl of eternity, and not to be staked on earth. But the thought behind it all was not your own. You yielded under the pressure of fear and advice. Your objections were overcome, and you obeyed an elder person in whom you had implicit confidence. That is all, and I understand."

"Then they did tell you about me!" she whispered breathlessly.

"No: you have told me all that I know of you, here in the dark. You are tender, modest, true, and pure; and were you my wife in truth, I would not be ashamed to tell this story to the world myself and own you as such after." The words fell from his lips so tenderly, so kindly, she took his hand in both of hers, and laid her face upon it, crying silently.

"The blame of it all is on our friend, the Doctor," he continued, deeply touched, and his voice a little unsteady. "What a tumultuous, headlong, hurricane sort of fellow he is! There is no blame for you: for look, if *I* am here, how could *you* have resisted him? And it is only his judgment that was at fault, after all,—only his judgment. Why, a truer heart never beat than Brodnar's."

"Would it offend you if I ask you a question?" She had waited for composure, and now did not lift her head.

"Why, no, of course."

"You are right sure?"

"Right sure."

"Then, how could any gentleman consent to be placed in such a position as yours? You must have known how embarrassing it was to be for me." His first inclination was to whistle out his astonishment, but he restrained himself.

"You forget, my child,—I see you have backslided into childhood,—you forget that in the first place I was appealed to in behalf of a woman, and no gentleman may resist that. And then I had no reason to suspect that I was to marry a girl. It might have been an experienced widow. Indeed——"

"But you are glad it wasn't, are you not?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, my child."

"Does my question then indicate that I am a child?"

"Yes, my child."

"I don't see why."

"Because you are still—a child." She was not satisfied.

"Mr. Somers, I want you to think well of me always, and the

thought that I may meet you sometime doesn't embarrass me now. It would not embarrass me if I did meet you,—even if I should meet you to-morrow. But I wish you to know all about me, and I am going to tell you everything from the beginning."

"No, indeed, you shall not," he said quickly. She lifted her head, startled.

"Why not—if I choose? I am not afraid to trust you."

"No! no! Miss Frances."

"Ah, I am a woman again!"

"Yes, a woman of a charm so sweet and a heart so true that Richard Somers must arm himself. Not your honor, but mine, the honor of your husband, is at stake, and you promised to regard that always."

"And I shall, sir; only tell me how."

"Why, I have promised my friend not to seek to find out, or permit anyone to tell me anything about you. I may not let even you inform me. You *must* not."

She was silent, disturbed, and wondering at his intense earnestness.

Then she said, in awe at the mystery of it all, "When we part to-night we are to meet no more? You may never take my hand in yours and speak kindly to me again? Oh, sir, you do not know, you do not know what your tenderness has done for the girl,—no, the woman you call a child. You do not know what it is to have missed a father's care, a mother's——"

"Hush!" he cried, "not one word more. You are making it hard—hard for me to keep faith with my friend. You are betraying his secret." She threw off his hand and arose suddenly, with an abandon of passion that overwhelmed him.

"What a mockery! what a mockery! I am ashamed—ashamed! It is I who am betrayed!" He had arisen also, full of emotion and almost unmanned.

"Never,—at my hands. I chose the words deliberately. I will honor and protect you,—to the best of my ability; but my ability ends where my promise began. All is based upon my contract with Francis Brodnar, my friend."

"Friend—friend!" she said bitterly; "in God's name, sir, what am I to you?" He was too deeply affected to answer at once. When he did his voice was unsteady.

"This: In the hour I have been here you have found an untrodden way to the heart of Richard Somers. I know now that no woman was ever there before you; none will ever follow you. I may not be here to give you my hand,—I do not know the circumstances that surround you, or even if in winning your sympathy I am playing false,—but wherever you are remember that my soul follows, and I would keep guard over you if I might." He spoke with an earnestness and passion

that disturbed and alarmed himself. Something like a groan burst from his lips when he realized how far he had committed himself, and he sank back in his chair. There presently she found him, and resting her hand timidly upon his arm she said gently:

"What would you have me answer you?" She was calm and confident now. At first she had shrunk a little from him. Her simple, confiding action restored to him his calmness.

"I would have you say at what hour it is you are accustomed to close the eyes which look down upon without seeing mine."

"At nine. But what is this upon your lapel,—a flower?"

"A white rose for our wedding."

With pretty show of authority she drew it from its resting-place and fixed it in her hair.

"Do not flowers belong to the bride?"

"Wear it in memory of me," he said gently. "But now I am going to insist that you take steps to preserve those other roses which I am sure have bloomed for you. Have you a dressing-room?"

"Yes, but I am not sleepy, and I shall not desert you. Wait. Speaking of the rose, I shall sing you a song I love very much,—that is, if I can find my guitar.—Ah, here it is! Now I'll sit here,—and you right there,—but I wonder if I can ever play in the dark. May I not have just a little light? I won't mind——"

"How easily you forget! It is impossible. Sing as you are; I shall not hear any discord." He was astonished at her swift change of mood and a new, glad note in her voice. She sang low and sweetly, with perfect control of her tones, the "Last Rose of Summer." And then he understood better. For in her voice he read that the soul and spirit of an impassioned woman dwelt in the slender frame veiled by the shadows of the room. He was silent. Every heartache that had been crushed out of his manhood seemed to have revived under the magic of a subtle tone, an indescribable, indefinable echo. It was a resurrection of something that had died hard within him.

"You do not like my singing," she said, disappointed, when, waiting for his praise, she found him silent and thoughtful.

"Your singing? Yes. But a men ory!—Go to sleep now. Make yourself comfortable and leave me to keep watch. Yet stay; will you not sing over those lines again? To me they are inexpressibly beautiful."

Standing in the doorway of her dressing-room she sang the verse through again softly without accompaniment, waited until she was assured that he would not speak, and then passed thoughtfully within. When she came forth arrayed in her wrapper, she paused beside him, puzzled over his change of mood.

"I am afraid you are going to be lonely," she said.

"Sleep, my child, sleep; I shall not be lonely,—knowing you are there."

"Perhaps I am keeping you awake?"

"Yes. That is it; you are keeping me awake!"

"Well, I am holding out my hands and saying 'Good-night,' " she said. He found, and pressed his lips upon them. He held them so tightly and trembled so violently she bent down over him confused. One of her curls, loosened, dropped upon his neck, and another across his cheek. The mingled odor of her hair and the rose filled him with a strange intoxication.

"I am sorry if I have distressed you in any way," she said; "you have been kind, oh, so kind to me. Good-night." He still held her hands, his face bowed upon them, his form shaking with a strange emotion. "Good-night," she said again. "If I do fall asleep and you are lonely,—oh, sir, you hurt my hands."

"Good-night," he whispered hoarsely, recovering himself and releasing them. She crossed the room, and he saw her, dimly, standing by the bed, as though in doubt. And then she sank softly to her knees and laid her head upon her arms, child-wise, in prayer. He arose and stood until he saw her head lifted.

"Wait," he said earnestly, "will you not pray also for me?"

"I have prayed for you already," she answered.

"Will you tell me the prayer?"

"Sometime, perhaps, when it has been answered."

He thought then that she had fallen asleep, but after a while she spoke again.

"Will you let me ask you a question,—of yourself again?"

"Yes, if you wish."

"Dr. Brodnar said that you had never had but one ambition in life, and that you had been disappointed. What did he mean?"

"I once had ambition to be a great soldier. That is all."

"Were you ever a soldier?"

"Yes, an officer in the regular army."

"And now?"

"I am a wanderer. A gentleman only."

"Why did you leave the army?"

"I struck my superior officer. They heard my defence and—let me resign."

"And the other,—what became of him?"

"He cheated at cards, was publicly insulted—and cashiered."

"Why did you strike him?"

"Is this asking 'a' question?"

"Oh, forgive me! Good-night."

"It is very short," he said repentantly. "There was a woman in

the case: the card incident was but a pretext." A low cry escaped the girl. Then she said, half rising:

"You loved her?"

"Yes." He heard her sink slowly back upon her pillow. "I thought so at least,—until now. I was mistaken in her; my pride was wounded." He arose and paced the room.

"Tell me of her, please?"

"She lived not far from Washington with a relative, her parents both dead. She had some means of her own and frequently came into the city, where she had friends. We met, and I believed in her; but this officer came between us. She thought him rich, and I was deserted for him. She belonged to that class of women who esteem wealth the foremost object of life, women who go deliberately to men they do not, cannot love, or even respect, and say in effect, 'Here, we have beauty, youth, freshness, for sale. Take us, dress us, give us jewels and fine clothes to wear, carriages to ride in; give us a chance to command the homage of men, and all that we have is yours. Watch for them upon your streets; all men know them at sight. God, but they pay at last! Look in when the excitement has passed and see upon their faces the frozen despair; see in the heaviness of their step the weight of a dead youth, and in their eyes eternal hopelessness. Child, child, be not deceived; love is the only gold that pays a woman. Shun them, these wretched advertisements of dishonor! Let no man come into the holiness of your life until love has sanctified the sacrifice.' He ceased abruptly, and the next instant was kneeling by her side. "Forgive me!" he cried. "Have I not told you I hold you blameless?" Suddenly he felt her arms about his neck, drawing his face to hers. Her hair enveloped and almost smothered him in a sudden storm. Holding him thus, she broke into such an agony of grief and tears as to render him speechless and helpless. She held him in such frantic embrace that each effort he made to free himself was defeated. When her strength was exhausted she sank back among the pillows breathless. He bent above her unnerved.

"How lonely, how barren must have been your life, that a little kindness—another's sorrows—should touch you so deeply!"

"Lonely! Speak rather of the persecution, the brutality, the infamy——!"

"Hush," he whispered. "No more—to me. Come, you must sleep." Rising abruptly, he left her side. When it was that she fell asleep he could not discover, but presently he seemed to hear her deep, regular breathing, and was thankful.

And so the moments passed. The girl started up once or twice and spoke his name; but always at sound of his calm, reassuring voice sank back again upon her pillow. From time to time he went and stood

above her,—a spell upon him new and strange, a spell that filled him with uneasiness and vague alarm. He was no longer lonely. In some mysterious way a burden seemed to be slipping away from him, and in its place came a sense of companionship sweet and comforting. Most men discount married life in their dreams, and few ever realize the fulness of those dreams; but with him it had been different. This strange experience preceded the dreams. Without a day's warning he had been plunged into the privacy of a young and modest woman's life, had become the guardian of her honor and in a measure of her future; and in a mysterious way the divine sweetness of her soul had issued forth and enveloped him. In the *chiaroscuro* of the still room he could just determine the outlines of her bed and upon its whiteness the outlines of her slender figure. He was glad that she slept: in that quiet falling asleep was for him the finest tribute ever paid to his manhood. A glad, quick pulse leaped from his heart as he realized this truth, and the words of the girl's mother, so artlessly repeated, came back to him.

Then in the desert of his life a stranger came before his tent and asked for shelter. He bade him enter. Why should not this scene be fixed and real and lasting? Would it be possible? Would the girl some day accept it as such, yielding still the trust and tenderness she had brought to the counterfeit? Was she trusting Brodnar? Or was she trusting him? The trust was in him. He felt it instinctively; and her little hand seemed to steal forth to his again, her arms to enfold him. What a child she was! And yet—and yet." An irresistible impulse seized him to be near her, to touch her hand, her hair, and to pass within the electric radius of her presence again, if but for a moment. He was her guardian whether she slept or awoke.

A strange curiosity to be near a sleeping girl, to enter further into her life and absorb the sweetness of its innocence, possessed him. She would not know, she would never know, perhaps; and why should he not snatch from fate this one brief moment of happiness? A doubt assailed him and brought hesitation; but with an impatient gesture he threw aside the hesitation. He would not let even himself doubt himself.

And so he came and stood above the sleeper, and presently, entranced, he kneeled and saw her lying there, vague, dim, and unrecognizable, but a girl asleep. Her face was towards him upon the pillow and one hand lay upon the edge of her bed. So quietly did she sleep she seemed not to breathe. He watched her until a tremor shook him from head to foot, and a never before experienced confusion seized upon his mind. Instinctively he leaned above her hand and touched it with his lips—lightly, reverently. She sighed and spoke his name, and, overwhelmed with sudden dismay, he would have withdrawn, but she seized his arms and cried out:

"Light! light!" And then brokenly, "Oh, sir, for the first time—I am—I am—frightened!" He sank his face beside her, overwhelmed with shame.

"It is half-past three," he said brokenly; "I must soon say farewell to you——"

"Oh, sir, will you not light the gas?" Seeing that she still trembled, he arose and went to his chair.

"No," he said calmly. "But sleep on. I shall not disturb you again." And then presently she came, and, kneeling in sudden abandon before him, placed her hands upon his shoulders, her face close into his.

"I shall not let you leave me thinking that I do not trust you," she said. "Oh, sir, kiss me now, my hands, my hair, my lips if you will. I trust implicitly! I trust you—yes, and more, I——"

"Child, child, you do not know what you are saying!" He covered his face with his hand.

"Child! No, Woman! You do not understand: it is you who are the child. Listen. I was not asleep when you struck a match and, turning your face from me, looked at your watch. I was awake, and I saw your face in the glass across the room."

"You should not——"

"It was an accident, and I thanked God, for it has given me a living memory of the kindest friend since mother died. It is not the first time, for your picture is in the Doctor's office. He did not know that I have hung over it—fixing it in my mind—many—many times,—oh, will you, will you say that you wish to see me? Have you no wish to remember me?"

"Remember you? I shall carry with me forever the sound of your voice, the touch of your hand, the perfume of every curl upon your head——"

"But my face! Will you look upon that? I release you from all your promises."

"I cannot! I cannot!"

"Oh, sir, think what it will mean to me in all the lonely days to come, the memory of you and the consciousness that you carry in your heart sometime the face of the girl who——!"

"It must not be. Remember your husband's honor! You promised to honor him. Is this the way?"

"My husband! my husband!" she cried, half rising, "you have said it!"

"Frances! Frances!"

"Ah, *Frances!* Say it all, *Frances, my wife.*"

"Frances, my wife!" A passionate cry burst from the girl's lips.

"Yes, Frances, your wife. The woman who loves you, who has

loved you from the day she saw your picture and heard your story! Oh, he never knew—he never dreamed it. Nothing can silence those words—‘Frances, my wife.’ I will look upon your face, and you shall, you shall see mine! The matches,—ah, they are here!”

“Hold!” he cried huskily. “I should be unworthy of your love and trust if I could break my sacred promise. Look upon me if you will, but the eyes that would weep tears of joy to see you will be closed while the match is burning. Look, if to carry in memory the living record of one face will help you, take mine, and with it, right or wrong, the love of Richard Somers.” She struck the match and held it above his lifted face, advancing her own and gazing eagerly upon him.

“Ah, again! again! *My husband, my husband,*” she murmured. “It is the face of an angel!” The match grew short and the fatal red spark was showing in the flame when there came a flash of light in the window across the room, the quick, sharp report of a pistol rang out, and Richard Somers, reeling, plunged through her arms face down upon the floor.

The awful silence that followed the tragedy was broken at length by the faint whisper of the dazed and half-unconscious girl.

“Speak,” she said, “kneeling over the prostrate form; ‘why—what is the matter?—what has happened?’ Her hands found his head and passed rapidly over it. “You do not answer me!” She drew slowly back from him, chilled with a great and unspeakable horror. Her hands were wet and slippery. Instinctively she knew it was blood. She could not rise nor cry out: her heart seemed paralyzed, her throat in the clutch of an invisible hand. The door opened silently, and the Doctor’s low voice was heard:

“Somers, Somers, the day is almost breaking.” There was no response. He spoke again. Then the two figures became dimly visible. “What has happened?” he whispered, bending above them. He too felt the tale-tale blood upon his fingers as he touched the prostrate man, and, rising hastily, struck a match. Somers lay senseless before him, the young woman kneeling by his side staring speechlessly upon her bloody hands. His quick glance swept the room and rested upon her. The match fell to the floor and went out, leaving the scene to blacker darkness.

“Remorse!” he said in a whisper, and was still. Rallying his faculties at length, Doctor Brodnar hurriedly lit the gas, and with his stern features contracted examined the fallen man and saw a wound back of the right temple from which the dark blood was still oozing.

“He has shot himself,” he said. A moment he stood, with covered face, wavering in his tracks. Suddenly the enormity of the interests at stake flashed upon him and stupor gave way to intelligent action. Seizing a towel, he wiped the girl’s hands and forced her into a chair.

"Stay there," he said; "and on your life do not cry out or leave the room before I return! Do you understand?"

"Yes," she said simply, and fixed her gaze upon the window. He bound the towel tightly about the head of the wounded man, lifted him in his arms as if he were a child, and passed out into the night. A few moments later the rush of wheels was heard upon the street.

"Some patient of the Doctor's is worse," said a policeman upon a corner two squares away as the flying vehicle passed him.

Doctor Brodnar was rescued from a bad complication by his especial treasure, Joe, the driver.

"Go and bring your mother," he said quickly, as he lifted the unconscious Somers from the carriage in front of his office. "Don't lose one second! Keep your mouth shut." Joe was out of hearing before the Doctor reached his operating-room. The Doctor's assistant, half dressed, appeared quickly. Somers was stretched upon a table, and his wound critically examined. The bullet had entered over and behind the right ear, and the side of his head was clotted with blood. A second wound an inch farther back became visible as the blood was washed away, but a probe carefully inserted in the forward wound came out of the other, touching the skull in passing. There was no particle of brain-matter in the blood.

"Syncope from concussion," said Brodnar. "Watch him carefully until I return *and do not permit him to speak.*" The sound of wheels approaching caused him to descend the steps three at a time. He pressed back the aged negro woman who was dismounting.

"To the same place, Joe! Hurry!" he said, and the door closed.

The woman so hastily secured was none other than the "mammy" who had looked after the welfare of Frances since infancy. She had been encouraged to absent herself for the night. Trained under the old *regime*, with a sense of proprietorship in her old mistress and daughter, with a deep and impregnable pride in the family, she needed no cautioning. Nevertheless Doctor Brodnar said as they entered silently the deserted yard:

"There has been an accident, mammy. Ask no questions and answer none. Permit nobody to see your young mistress. Do you understand?"

"De chile ain't hu't, young marster?"

"No. A friend was. Her mind has been affected deeply by her father's condition and this shock has upset her. You must know nothing more of it."

Frances sat as he had left her, in the arm-chair. She offered no resistance when they laid her upon the bed and administered an opiate. The stains of blood were carefully removed from her hands and her wrapper changed, and Doctor Brodnar prepared to depart, for the day

was now breaking. He remembered the pistol, and was searching the floor for it, when the reaction set in and Frances began to cry bitterly. Obeying his silent motion, mammy passed into the dressing-room and he took the girl's hand.

"The whole blame rests upon me," he said gently. "Keep quiet; I will see you through." And then a cry burst from him: "What a fool! what a fool! And to think that Dick Somers——!" At sound of this name the girl's grief became almost uncontrollable.

"He loved me," she said brokenly. "And it has cost him his life!"

"Loved you! Never! If he had aimed better, I could forgive him." She was silent.

"If he had aimed better!"—then she sat up with almost frantic energy.

"Yes. The wound is not fatal. Frances, Frances,—back, my child——"

"Take me to him—I must, I must go to him——"

"You are simply mad!"

"He is my husband,—I love him! I love him!"

Brodnar groaned and turned away his head. Suddenly the girl shivered and drew back, her gaze set fearfully on something behind him.

"Close the window," she whispered in a changed voice, "they may return."

"Why—what—what do you mean?" He was upon his feet, a strange light in his face.

"It came from that window," she whispered fearfully; "some one fired through the slats."

"God in Heaven!" he cried, "I thank you! Dick! Dick! forgive me!" He plunged out into the gray dawn and left the girl amazed and terrified.

III.

RICHMOND at the time these events were occurring was in a tumult of excitement. The quarrel between the North and South in Congress had long since reached the acute stage, and preparations were forming for that titanic struggle which was to shake America for four long years. South Carolina had led off, followed by Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. The capital of the Confederacy was in the far South, and while no one expected that Richmond was to become the centre of political intrigue, it had been easily foreseen that Virginia, being a slave State, would join her Southern sisters, and that if war followed she would furnish the battle-ground by reason of her geographical position. Few people believed in a serious conflict to come, but there were some who foretold a bloody struggle, and these

were among the powerful, who gave time and direction to public sentiment.

There was much discussion in State military circles and a confident prediction that when the crisis came the South must recall her sons from the service of the Union and enlist them under the banners of the State's rights party, leaving many vacancies difficult to fill.

Upon his couch in the rooms of Richmond's popular physician Richard Somers lay, convalescent. His wound proved easy of management and healed rapidly. But in the empty hours given to him for recovery he reviewed his late experience, and with small comfort for himself. Carried away by sentiment, he had permitted himself to involve seriously a young girl intrusted to his care. He had acted like a sentimental boy, he told himself, rather than as a man coolly transacting a piece of business to which a friend had commissioned him. Evidently the whole matter hinged upon the succession of property, and he was simply an instrument. But he had suffered himself to be swept along by sentiment, and had declared his love for a girl altogether unknown to him,—indeed, unseen. In conclusion, somebody had put a bullet through his head, the only mistake being in the matter of aim. He had received no explanation from Brodnar other than that an error had cost him the wound. There was a multitude of apologies, the tenderest of care,—and silence. But one day he arose and dressed himself, and, barring a slight dizziness of head, found the world about as he had left it. And then Brodnar told him of such facts as he himself had knowledge.

"You were shot from a window by someone who saw you strike a match, my dear fellow, and who didn't care whether your eyes were closed or not," he said.

"But who was the assailant,—and what was the object?"

"Under the window I found tracks, the tracks of a woman's number two shoes, clear cut and sufficiently deep to suggest that the wearer was in all probability a settled woman. And yet a heavy woman's foot would not have been so trim. There you have it all."

"Why should she have been there, and why should she have shot me?"

"My dear fellow, ask me who wrote Shakespeare and the letters of Junius. Frankly, I know nothing on earth about this shooting beyond the simple fact. Perhaps the shot was not aimed at you." Somers reflected for a moment.

"Possibly you are correct in the suggestion. But if you, with all the information you have and knowledge of these people, are at sea, I have no chance to unravel the mystery. Evidently my best plan is my first plan—to leave at once. Someone lives who saw me in that room. The sooner I go now the better for the good of all. Only I would have

you tell me again—if I may venture that far—if my young friend is well, and understands that my recovery is accomplished.”

“She is well,” said Brodnar with some constraint, “and understands.”

“Look here, Francis, the truth is,” said Somers rising, “I am not fond of mystery. I proposed to keep my promise and shall, but, man, I came near being involved in a life-long affection that night, and I ask you now if I am to leave here with no further information——”

“Yes,” said Brodnar, “otherwise you would defeat the object of the whole plan. Nothing could be more unfortunate for the girl than that you should see her again or knowledge of that marriage get abroad.”

“So be it,” said Somers sadly. “I keep my promise. To-night we say good-by.” Brodnar sat, moodily silent, drumming upon his desk, his eyes upon the floor. Suddenly he stood erect.

“Somers, I owe you something, owe you more than I may ever be able to repay; I shall tell you this much, and let you decide for the woman——”

“A telegram, Doctor, for Mister R. Somers,—your care.” A boy had entered hurriedly and stood waiting. Somers took the message from the Doctor’s hand, and, the messenger vanishing, he read aloud:

“Report in person immediately to this office.

“STANTON,
“Secretary of War.”

Brodnar looked steadily into the glad, bright face of his friend, who was upon his feet in an instant and full of excitement.

“Will you report there?”

“Will I?—It is the dream of my life, Brodnar!—but—but—you were saying——”

“Nothing.”

“I do not understand you, Frank.”

“No member of the family, Dick, you have entered, ever drew sword against Virginia. You must choose between the woman and——”

“My country? Is that it? How would you choose, Frank?” Brodnar was silent, looking away. “Take this message to her for me, my friend, it is the last request, perhaps, I shall ever make to you——”

“Dick——”

“Say to her that Richard Somers passes out of her life to serve his country. His duty done, please God, and she needs his arm, he will follow her to the end of the earth. Say that for me; and then, farewell.”

IV.

THE morning sun striking through the eastern window of a hotel room shone full upon the face of a woman who lay sleeping there. She was dressed as for the street, but her hair was loose and fell about her shoulders in gleaming, golden masses. Even in the trying light upon it her face was beautiful. Perfectly oval, it possessed a combination of dark shadings rarely found in blonde types, and the even brows were as delicate as though pencilled by an artist. Upon her cheeks lay long, dark lashes. Sleeping, she seemed scarcely more than a girl in age, the few lines upon her face fading out of prominence; and yet there was a womanliness in her trim, settled figure that told of years not otherwise to be suspected.

The bell of a tower clock near at hand rang out loudly the hour. The sleeper stirred uneasily, opened her eyes, and instantly, as full consciousness returned, bounded from the bed to the floor. In the quick look which she gave to her surroundings terror was apparent. A moment later she had pulled the bell-cord and was waiting, her watch in hand, by the door. A negro servant knocked and was admitted. She did not notice his old-fashioned and courteous salute.

"Why was I not called for the six o'clock train?" she began in great agitation.

"We call t'ree times, ma'am,—t'ree times; an' you say 'all right' ev'y time, ma'am."

"I answered?"

"Yes, ma'am. An' we t'ink, ma'am, mebbly you done change yo' min'." Something like despair came to her face.

"The time now?"

"Nine o'clock, ma'am. Clock des now struck, ma'am. Gem'man down-stairs sen' dis cyard, ma'am, an' say——" The gentleman in question passed the speaker, stepping across the threshold.

"You may go," he said curtly, and waited until the old servant had retired and closed the door. Then he tured coolly towards the woman. "And now, madam, what does this mean?"

"Raymond!"

"Why have you left London?" The woman did not answer. She had cried the name hysterically and started forward; then suddenly, drawing the hair from her face, she shrank away from him, her gray eyes distended in terror or the expectation of violence. In the presence of this pantomime the man's face lost its cynicism and sternness. He was unmistakably astonished. "Well," he said at length, "what is it?"

"You here!" The exclamation was but a whisper. "I thought——"

"Why should I not be here? Didn't you write, requesting me to come? I was not in the city yesterday, nor last night, and have but just received your foolish letter. Are you mad indeed,—that you come to this city,—that you follow me up in public!—Name of Heaven, woman, what is the matter with you?"

"Not in the city last night! Not in the city! Then—then——" She caught a chair. "Oh, I am ill—ill!" She seemed about to fall, but her companion made no movement to assist her. "There is some—mistake!" she whispered. "Some awful—mistake!"

"What are you talking about?" He stood looking curiously upon her. She turned suddenly, ran to him, and, falling upon her knees, clasped her arms about him, giving way at the same time to a paroxysm of hysteria that swayed them both with its violence. He stooped impatiently, broke her clasp with a violent effort, and half pushed, half lifted her into the chair. Burying her face in her hands, she gave way to violent weeping while he stood by.

The man was of medium height and fine figure, his faultless dress and his every motion revealing the fashionable world. His face might have been handsome at one time, but something had fled from it, and something had come to it since then. That which had come men usually call the marks of dissipation; that which had fled they had no name for.

He might have been genuinely indignant or playing a part, but he gazed sternly a few moments only upon the agitated woman, his black eyes gleaming wickedly; then, with a sneer and slight gesture of dismissal, turned away. Taking from his pocket a case, he proceeded calmly to select and light a cigarette, and walking unconcernedly to the fireplace, tossed his match into it. Standing with his back towards her, he busied himself with a hunting scene above the mantel. And thus, presently, the woman, ceasing to cry, found him. She clasped her hands upon her chair-arm convulsively and lifted her head.

With a few rapid motions she twisted the fallen hair into position and arose to her feet.

"When you have finished with the picture," she said, "listen to me." Startled, he whirled and faced her. Her figure was now erect and head lifted. The tenderness was gone from her eyes. Wide open, they seemed to measure and threaten him. He came slowly forward, the sneer upon his face:

"You gave me your promise to remain in London until I returned," he said, "and you have broken it."

"And you! you told me that you were here to wind up some estate matters and would return immediately. You had no idea of returning. You intended to desert me. You lied! Where is my child, sir?" The man's face flushed and grew deathly pale. He took two quick steps

forward and hesitated. "It is useless, Raymond, to try to frighten me. You were born a coward—and I was not. Look to yourself!" She drew from her bosom a letter and extended it towards him. "I found this after your departure; it is from your mother." His assumed indifference vanished. Furious, he snatched the letter from her and raised his arm.

"Wretch!"

"Take care," she said coldly, slowly withdrawing her hand. "You are dealing with a desperate woman. You are welcome to your letter. I know it by heart. In it I am called by a vile name,—and you are told that a bride and fortune await you at home. You came." He was silent. "You do not deny it," she added. With a slight gesture he turned away and seated himself.

"There is no need to deny it now," he said. "Sit down, Louise." She waited a moment, and moving a chair a few feet away seated herself, facing him.

"We have both made mistakes," he said coolly, preparing to light another cigarette, "and I am willing to admit that in all the matters between us I have been equally to blame, but," he added between puffs, as he smoked, "you have a full share to settle for yourself. It is, however, too late to discuss the beginning of this association. We must consider its end: for, as you evidently surmised, the time to end it has come." She made no reply, but waited for him to continue, her clear gray eyes riveted upon his. "You have not believed me, but it is true, nevertheless, that I am entirely dependent upon my mother. My little property has long since disappeared with yours; she holds the whip hand. Ever since her second marriage she has intended me for a young girl, her step-daughter in fact——"

"You have known this all along——?"

"Yes; and while the child was growing up she has tolerated this life of mine. Now she proposes to end it. The question is, how may you and I settle it?"

"I see!"

"You are practical enough to understand that I am helpless. If I should refuse the old lady, I could not live twenty-four hours without work; nor could you. If I yield, as I must, you will be provided for—with little—Nanon."

The woman gasped and pressed her hand to her throat, but with a desperate effort controlled herself.

"Where is she?"

He hesitated while he studied the blue smoke curling up from the cigarette. Shaking off the ashes, he said at length:

"I have her in good hands." Their eyes met.

"And you mean for me to understand, I suppose, that you will

retain possession of her until I assent to your plans." Again he was silent for a moment.

"Yes, that is about the way the matter stands." There was a long and painful pause, during which the woman seemed to struggle with some powerful emotion. She arose and approached him, one hand in the bosom of her dress, the other clasped until her nails sank in the flesh.

"You told me that you—to try and get—your mother interested—in her grandchild." Her voice was strained and barely audible.

"Yes," said he, "I think I did tell you that."

"Well?"

"I lied! I took her only to control you. My mother has never seen her; and," he continued slowly, "never will, if I can prevent it."

"Inhuman wretch!" The exclamation was little more than a gasp.

"From your stand-point—yes."

"Ah," she whispered, "the infamy! the infamy of it!" She hesitated a moment, turned, and gliding to the door with a movement of incredible swiftness locked it and placed the key in her pocket. "Now," she said, returning towards him, her face transfigured by the intensity of her excitement, "now, Raymond Holbin, what is the settlement you propose?" He retained his position, a half smile upon his face.

"You will have no trouble for the future," he said; "you belong to the tragic stage."

"You trifle, sir. The settlement! the settlement!"

"I propose to marry my mother's step-daughter," he said quietly. "Her father is on his last legs, and he will bequeath to her all of his property upon the condition that she accepts me as her husband on or before her twenty-first birth-day. From this money I propose to provide liberally for you and your child, with the understanding that you are to remain abroad. The fact is, I may run over to see you occasionally, Louise,—after all, you are the only woman I ever cared for. This lily bride awaiting me—is out of my class entirely,—high flown, romantic, and inexperienced. Imagine me with such a woman, Louise."

He laughed lightly. "Really, if you are in search of revenge for fancied injuries, you will get it when you picture me in my new *role*."

"And by this marriage," said the woman standing over him, "you place it beyond your power to marry me, as you have promised during all these years,—you abandon your child to a life of wretchedness;"—her breath came hard and she was shivering and trembling.

"She need never know,—no one need know. And where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be otherwise."

"Let me hear it all," she said; "let me know the alternative. If I

go to this mother or to this lily bride, as you call her, and tell her of my child and my wrongs, what then?"

"My mother would have the servants put you out of the house, and my bride would probably have me put out. But it would not avail you anything,—nor her. Under the will my mother would still be the heir. The bride would lose her fortune and her bridegroom, and you—would lose your child."

"That is all?" she asked,—“there is nothing more?"

"Nothing."

Her mood seemed to change. "Will you favor me with a cigarette?"

He laughed, evidently relieved. "Why, certainly! getting into your old habits? Fact is, Louise, that is the only natural thing I have heard from you since I entered. Come now, light up and be sensible. You know what I think of you. All will work out right, and, as the stories say, 'we may be happy yet.'"

She lit her cigarette by his, and, leaning against the centre-table, took one or two whiffs, letting the smoke escape slowly from between her curving lips.

"There is one fatal defect in your plan," she said at length.

"Yes? What is that?"

"You—do not leave—the *mother* a chance. You forget that I am a mother as well as a woman."

"I do not understand."

"You will, though. Either way, as you put it to me, my child's life is forever blasted; there is the defect." He looked somewhat curiously up to her face. The smoke was now coming from her lips in rapid puffs; she cast aside the cigarette. "I shall not assent." The words were a mere whisper. She continued with growing emotion, "Raymond, I have been your slave; that is ended now. From this moment, if you live, you shall obey me!"

"If I live!"

"If you live! Do you suppose that I am to stand by and see my child's life destroyed by you! I have listened to your excuses, I have temporized, hoping against hope that you would make good your promises; I have accepted your explanation for my child's sake;—and to-day I know you have lived a lie through it all; that you had not then, nor ever have had, any intention to make me your wife. The time has come for me to act. Sit here by this table and address a note to the clerk of the hotel directing him to register Raymond Holbin and wife in room 28! Here is pen, ink, and paper."

"Are you insane?" he cried, rising, angry and amazed.

"Yes; totally so! Insane enough to kill you. Then she deliberately levelled a pistol at him. "Sit down and write! I leave this room with an acknowledgment from you in the hands of a witness, a wife—

or a murderess. I did it once, Raymond; I can do it again. I killed a man for you last night!" As she uttered this confession her face grew pale as death, the pistol was lowered, and she stood shivering in abject terror. "You have not heard of it?" she whispered. "Are not the papers full of it?" Her form, which had been erect, seemed to shrink, she looked over her shoulder towards the door listening. The man strode forward and wrenched the weapon from her cold hand. Then he forced her into a chair.

"Louise! Louise!" he groaned; and then in awe he said, "Insane!" She made no resistance. A tide of memories had swept away the new issues.

"No," she moaned, "not yet. Would to God I were! You do not believe me, Raymond. Listen. I found out where you were stopping in the city. I found the street and number. I had determined to go in and bring the horrid uncertainty to an end, for you had not answered my letter,—you had not come!"

"But you did not go in!" he said, terrified. "Surely you did not——!"

"No. I walked by again and again. I went around to the side street and looked into the garden; but I said, 'I will see him first; Raymond cannot mean to be so base!' Still you did not come. Will you believe it, I went back at night, hoping to see you? I could not stay here alone in this room,—I slipped out! Two men entered that gate and one of them I would have sworn was you. I followed and saw them enter the wing-room. While I waited there, wondering if you would appear again—it was but a few minutes, I think—one of the men came from the wing-room, passed me, and, going out, locked the gate. I was a prisoner, for the fence was tall with spikes of iron. Then I went and stood under the window, thinking the room was yours and I might attract your attention; and I heard your voice and a woman's in there——"

"It is a lie!—a lie! the room belongs to Frances. I was not in the city."

"Frances? Who is Frances? But no matter, they were there all night; and I, crazed and abandoned, wept and raged outside."

"You are simply daft, Louise, you don't know what you are saying."

"They were there, I tell you. Once a match was struck and I could hear a woman pleading; and,—there I was, lying upon the ground, the window just out of my reach. Then I found myself climbing the ivy and clinging to the shutters; and I saw you sitting there, this woman with curly golden hair kneeling in her night dress before you, her hand upon your shoulder, saying good-by to her lover while she held a lighted match above his face——"

"Louise, this is unbearable!" Holbin was beside himself.

"I thrust your pistol between the shutters, took aim at you, and fired; my aim was true; the man fell forward into the darkness, and I back upon the wet grass. Look! See the stains of the crushed ivy! see the soil upon the gown! see the blistered hands! look at your pistol! The hammer is upon an empty shell! I got up and ran for the gate, but a man was entering and his carriage stood opposite. Crouching in the shrubbery, I saw him come back"—her voice sank to a whisper—"with a dead man in his arms. I got here—how I do not know—and locked myself in. When you came I thought it was your spirit. What will they do with me?—Will they lock me in gaol? Will they hang me? Why don't you speak to me, Raymond? Why do you look at me that way? Raymond! Raymond!—I did not know what I was doing! I was insane, jealous! I had lost my child,—oh, they ought to know that, Raymond, before they judge me too harshly. Raymond, Raymond, answer me—answer!" He mastered his emotion by a powerful effort.

"You have had your revenge!" he said hoarsely, his lips parting in a soundless laugh. "The shot went to the mark!" He sank in his chair by the table and gazed helplessly upon her agitated face, his thoughts elsewhere.

"But I do not understand," she said. "My revenge, if you were not the man——"

"Why, it is incredible!" he cried angrily. "Give me the key! the key! the key! Quick! the clock is striking ten,—the key!"

"You will not give me up, Raymond,—the mother of your child!—you will not——"

"Ah—no, no, Louise. You are safe while I live. Quick! the key!" She gave it to him, and passing out he said sternly, "Stay here! Don't let your face be seen outside this door. Change your dress, remove every stain upon it, and be ready to leave the city at a moment's notice. Courage! I will save you if I can. As he stepped into the hall-way, he muttered to himself,—“Now for the will! Long live the nightmare! and yet——” He added, pausing in doubt, “Suppose it were true?” He unbreached the pistol. “One cartridge is gone! the muzzle stains my finger! Louise! Louise——!” He turned, locked the door, and vanished.

"The woman in 28," he said to the clerk, "has escaped from an asylum. Keep a watch in her hall until I return, and let no one enter."

"We thought so," said the functionary behind the desk.

V.

FACING the sun on the same morning which broke through the lengthened slumbers of Louise in the Richmond hotel, an old man sat in an invalid chair. Everything that wealth could provide for his comfort, everything demanded by convention, surrounded him. No one would ever say, looking in upon the appointments of his house, that the sick man lacked anything that loving sympathy and tender solicitude could suggest. The deep velvet carpet gave back no sound under the feet of those who moved around him; curtains of damask and lace softened the too direct rays of light which entered the long windows across the balcony; bits of landscape and color relieved the wide expanse of wall; and flowers lent freshness and fragrance to the soft spring air sparingly admitted.

The old man was haggard from loss of rest and from apprehension. His once florid face was pallid and the cheeks sunken. His eyes shone with an unnatural brilliancy. One need not have been a skilled physician to have detected the fact that death's seal was upon that pale face and shrunken frame. The tiny spark of life might glimmer in its socket for days, weeks, even months; it would never again send up a clear and steady blaze.

Within the same room several people had gathered, controlled by varied sentiments. Doctor Brodnar was there, his massive frame bent above the sick man, his eyes everywhere. Pulse, respiration, temperature, were patiently ascertained, and with unsatisfactory results, evidently, for the Doctor's face was a tell-tale. Once or twice his eyes rested upon a tall woman in black who moved slowly about the invalid, touching his hands and forehead, admonishing him gently, and keeping watch upon the physician's actions with a singular intentness.

This woman was of marked personality. Her iron-gray hair was brushed back smoothly from a broad, low forehead, her black eyes were well sunk under dark brows and lashes, but flashed indolently from time to time when she was speaking. The small, straight, relentless mouth and aquiline nose gave a note of severity to her face. Her charm, it is likely, had existed in the contour and coloring of that face, and in a certain easy self-reliance, or consciousness of power. Just now her face was inscrutably placid. She spoke only in tones so low as to be audible but a short distance.

Across the room a girl stood looking idly, dreamily, from a casement window into the trees. She was slender, with a mass of reddish-golden curls gathered back and fallen upon her shoulders. Her profile revealed birth and refinement, and suggested nobility, high purpose, and innate purity. There was a wistful tenderness about her mouth

and a soft radiance in her blue-gray eyes when from time to time she turned towards the group gathered about the sick man.

"I am at loss, madam," the Doctor was saying, "to account for his lack of improvement. There seems to be nothing organically wrong, and yet the nerve-centres are totally inactive." He picked up several medicine-bottles and examined them, testing their contents by smell and sight. The tall woman's eyes met his.

"He passed a restless night," she said, laying her hand upon the sick man's forehead. "There was considerable confusion in the city, and some one just before daylight fired a pistol near the house. This gave him a fearful shock."

"There is much excitement in Richmond over the secession movement," said Brodnar, "and the police are far too few for these times. What have you given him during the night?"

"I want my daughter to be present," said the sick man fretfully; "I want her to hear the will read before I sign it, Doctor."

"I am here, papa," said the girl, coming slowly forward and standing quietly near him. He looked into her face long and intently, his own softening.

"I would suggest," said the Doctor, rising and addressing the elder woman, "that we may leave them alone for a few moments; he seems a trifle brighter just now." She fixed her black eyes upon him steadily, and a slight smile moved the hard lines of her mouth.

"It would not do. Frances is excitable, and excitement is contagious."

"But I am sure, madam——!"

"It is useless, sir. He relies entirely upon me, and is nervous if I leave him for even a minute." Her white hand fell in rhythmic monotony upon the invalid's forehead. Presently he reached up impatiently and pushed it away; but, waiting a moment, she resumed her caressings, and he made no further resistance.

"I want my daughter to hear it read," he said querulously, reverting to a thought unspoken.

"Oh, I would not let her do that, sir," said Brodnar. "You will not permit *that*, madam!"

"She shall hear it," said the woman. "It pleases him: and he has a good object in it, I am sure."

A professional man who had been writing at a side table now came forward and read the dying man's will, a notary standing near. The latter exchanged glances with Brodnar and looked away, a half smile upon his lips. The document, after the usual recitations and the naming of numerous small legacies for family servants and others, proceeded as follows:

"And the residue of my property, my wife, Annette, having been

amply provided for by deed of gift during my life, I bequeath to my daughter, Frances Brookin, upon condition that she shall, on or before attaining the age of twenty-one years, accept as her lawful husband Raymond Holbin, who has asked her hand of me, my object being to provide for the future of a wayward girl by giving her a guardian who is in all respects a gentleman and worthy of every confidence. But if my said daughter, Frances, fails or declines to marry the said Raymond Holbin within the limit of her minority, or immediately after attaining her majority, then I will and declare that all the property named and described as the residue of my estate, after legacies specified have been paid, shall vest in my wife, Annette, the said Frances to become a charge upon my estate during life for sustenance and clothing only, unless it happens that she enters into a marriage contract with someone other than the said Raymond Holbin, in which event the charge shall cease and the estate be acquitted of all demands from her, her heirs or assigns."

Absolute silence followed the reading of the document, except that an exclamation, half an oath, half a groan, burst from the Doctor's lips. He strode to the table and picked up his hat, but paused when his gaze fell upon the figure of the slender girl. She stood erect, proudly looking at the group, her calm white face outlined against the damask curtains as the face of a statue. He laid his hat on the table and, moving a little nearer to her, waited. The sick man grasped the pen with feverish energy and signed, the witnesses immediately attesting. The tall, grave woman took the legal instrument and applied a blotter. Then folding it, she placed it in her bosom. To the lawyer's embarrassed protest she said:

"I am the executrix of this will and I prefer to be its custodian. That is your desire, dear, is it not,—you wish to keep the will here in the house?" The exhausted invalid nodded feebly. At this moment the door opened and Raymond entered the room. The elder woman, with an angry flush upon her face, walked rapidly towards him, and the lawyer passed out with the notary.

"Fool!" she whispered, "you endanger it all!" She drew him into a bay window, where they began an animated discussion. Brodnar had but one free moment, but in that moment he acted. The girl had been left standing by her father's side. She alone caught the sentence whispered to her by the physician; her eyes followed him as he walked slowly away and then returned to rest upon the sick man. Gazing into his wan face, all her tenderness came back. Suddenly she sank by his side and clasped her hands upon his knees.

"Father!" she said gently, "one word! Will you let me speak now? We may be parting for all eternity." He opened his eyes and looked steadily upon her.

"It is for eternity," he said. And then, somehow, his hand found her head and rested there gently. "You are proud, Frances, and hurt, but the time will come when you will know that—I have acted for the best——"

"Oh, you think so," she said, shaking with half-suppressed emotion and hiding her face. "I know you think so. But——"

"Listen, Frances! You have a cousin whose name has long since ceased to be spoken in my family. She was—proud—and wayward—and headstrong too. You are very like her as she was—when her father's will made her my ward:—as she was—when she—passed—away——"

"She is dead!"

"Yes, to us!" he waited for breath and strength to proceed. "A husband—would have saved her. She had a right under the will—to choose—her residence. A foolish aunt received her. She followed her own fancy——!"

"I would not talk of it, father. It excites you."

"I must! She was always—heedless—of advice,—self willed—jealous:—And then she—disappeared—leaving—a note—and disgrace! I let her go. She is dead to me!" After a pause he continued: "I have seen you drifting away,—Frances! disobedient—unloving:—I would save you—if I could. Weep no more—I have forgiven; I have forgiven——!" The girl lifted her face quickly, indignant and agonized.

"You have been deceived, father; oh, so basely deceived. I am not wayward,—I have never yet disobeyed you. If you had permitted I should have been with you night and day."

"If I had permitted!"

"Yes. It was you, they told me," she brokenly said,—“it was you who sent me among strangers to school,—you who wished me never to come into your room——”

"Frances!"

"It is too late now," she said in anguish, "but I cannot part from you without telling you the truth. I love you, father. I would have been your dear daughter if you had not put it beyond my power."

"Child! What is it you are saying?"

"Do you not understand, father?" she said passionately, "do you not know that that woman has for years deprived you of your independence,—of your freedom? Now she has taken your property! Can't you see it? You have been robbed of everything;—and I——! Oh, she has preyed upon your holiest feelings; she has turned you against your only child,—the child to whose mother you promised to guard and guide!"

He raised himself in his chair. A look of fright was upon his face.

"See!" she said, "there is the woman with her son dividing your

property before you are dead. Oh, they think I am harmless now; I am not to be feared! the die is cast, the will is signed—and you, father, have betrayed your only child into the hands of her bitterest enemy.”

He was speechless and pale. His dull eyes were fixed on the girl’s.

“But no,” he said faintly, “this cannot be, it cannot be! My child, you are wronging a good woman;—and Raymond—he has been very kind, so very kind!”

“You are blinded, father; you are unsuspecting. Tell me, have they ever said that for months I have been eager to be with you; that——?”

“You, Frances! Why, you refused over and over——” She sank her head upon her chair.

“And you believed that of *me*? It was untrue—a cruel, cruel invention.”

Mother and son caught the sound of her agitated voice and would have come over from the bay window, but Doctor Brodnar, drawing the sofa around as though to sit with them, stood with his hand resting upon it, completely blocking their way.

“To-day and to-night,” he said, “he must have absolute quiet. Continue the powders I have left, and see that he does not attempt, under any circumstances, to walk about the room. He continued rapidly to give directions concerning the treatment of the patient, and disregarded the woman’s efforts to pass him. Frances lowered her voice and continued earnestly:

“You do not believe me, father, you do not realize what you have done. You do not know the man to whom you have consigned me, nor the woman to whom you gave your name years ago. You knew nothing then! you know nothing now! You took her from Washington because she fascinated you as she had fascinated all those other men. You believed in her, because she knew intimately the great politicians. She was smart, too smart for an honest, honorable Virginia gentleman. Oh, my eyes have been opened to-day; the son is worthy of his mother. I do not know who Louise is, but a friend has just told me to say to you this, ‘Ask Raymond Holbin what he has done with Louise; for he is the man who betrayed her by a mock marriage and took her abroad.’”

Motionless, but with straining eyes, the old man sat gazing at his daughter.

“Who—told you—that?” he gasped. She made no reply, a sudden anxiety for him banishing every other emotion. With a mighty effort, and before she could prevent him, he arose and staggered forward. The group dissolved and hurried towards him. Disregarding the physician and the woman, he leaned forward, and thrusting his face near to Holbin said with frantic energy:

"Sir, where is my niece? Where is Louise?" Holbin drew back. "Speak, you coward!" Holbin did not reply, but stood with eyes cast down, his face as pale almost as that which challenged him. The old man tore at his throat and gasped in a mighty struggle for breath. "My will!—my will!" he cried, moving feebly towards his wife. She retreated, keeping just beyond his hand. "Give—me—back—the—ah——!" A look of unutterable horror rose to his face; he wavered, plunged forward, and would have fallen, but Brodnar took him in his arms and laid him on the floor. For a moment not a sound broke the silence of the room.

"Who—will—protect—my daughter?" he whispered. Frances, his hand in hers, knelt in agony by his side.

"Have no fear for me, my father; God has raised up a defender!" Hearing this, Brodnar suddenly thrust back the group, leaving the girl alone with the dying man, to whom she whispered earnestly and rapidly. As he lay looking into her face a new light came for a brief moment to his and vanished. Brodnar, kneeling, placed his ear above the motionless heart. The moments passed.

"Dead!" he said at length, and arose. Raymond Holbin had paused at the door. He turned and exchanged glances with his mother and passed out.

Frances lay with her face upon the dead man's breast.

PART II.

VI.

IN all the throng that followed to the grave in Hollywood the remains of the wealthy and once distinguished John Brookin there was, aside from family servants, but one sincere mourner. The slender figure of his daughter Frances, supported by the strong arm of Dr. Brodnar, shook with an agony of grief. She had not looked on death since her mother died, and the passing of the saintly woman had been but as sleep prolonged into eternity. But here was the consciousness of a great wrong; the discovery of an error beyond remedy; here was the end of a tragedy in which she had been made to act a fatal part. Her rightful protector had been stricken from her.

"Courage, my child!"—she heard the Doctor's voice and felt his arm press upon her hand,—"*courage!* Save your strength for the struggle to come. Live now to defeat the enemies of your father." Her frail figure strengthened and grew steady; she no longer leaned upon his arm.

"Dust to dust, ashes to ashes." The minister's voice rang out the

sad and solemn words; the clay dropped and clattered solemnly upon the coffin-box.

The prayer that followed was marked by a dramatic incident. Frances knelt by the open grave with moving lips that uttered no sound. Doctor Brodnar alone understood that her petition was no prayer, but a pledge that would never be forgotten. The widow stood opposite, veiled in deepest black, the apotheosis of grief.

It was a matter of general comment that Raymond Holbin was not present at the funeral. It was given out that a sudden indisposition had detained him at home. But the indisposition of Raymond Holbin was a fiction pure and simple. There would have been no more discreet and well-behaved mourner by the grave than he; but there was nothing to be gained in attending the funeral, and there was a matter of vital importance which must be settled in the deserted residence of the deceased.

For Holbin was a bewildered and unhappy man. Not that he feared Louise. The Brookin will and the death of the testator apparently secured his interests, even should Louise be rash enough to carry out her threats of exposure. This, however, he felt assured she would never attempt. Terror of the law had already proved itself potent to control her. In his hurried and frequent visits to the hotel he had ascertained the fact that she was for the time being completely in his power. Reaction from her fierce excitement had set in; she clung to him, helpless and penitent. That she had seen a man at midnight in the wing-room of the Brookin house and had shot him, he did not doubt that she believed. As for himself, there were times when he had thought her simply insane—the victim of an illusion; and yet the facts seemed to support her statement that she had visited the premises. Clearly his best course lay in the support of the illusion.

This, then, was the invention which Holbin carried to the ear of the miserable woman: The man she had slain was indeed the lover of the woman in that room; he had been killed instantly, and a friend had carried away the body. To save the family's name a suicide had been declared; rejected over and over, it was said, the young man had come into the garden and had shot himself. All the evidence and the surrounding circumstances pointed plainly to this theory. The man who discovered him, it was said, had found a note from the suicide upon his table, directing him where to look for his body; but, added Holbin, while the coroner had by a skilful selection of a jury from among the family's friends secured a hasty verdict in accordance with the theory of suicide, it was apparent that the police were suspicious, and it was said that some of them were quietly searching for the woman who had left the imprints of number two shoes under the window of the wing-room. Such was the story.

Louise believed it implicitly. The horror of her crime deprived her for the time of her mental powers and good judgment. She suffered herself to be guided and directed by Holbin. She was consigned to the care of an elderly negro woman, and readily accepted her room as her prison. It was not long before she was physically powerless to leave it.

Raymond Holbin's most serious apprehension during the day which witnessed the death of John Brookin grew out of the fact that by inference at least he had been charged with crime in connection with Louise. His common sense told him that something said by Frances in her last interview with her father had provoked the sudden accusation. What did Frances know of Louise, and who was her informant! Gradually during the day his suspicious nature secured ascendancy over his common sense. A secret visit outside the window of the wing-room betrayed the still distinct tracks made by Louise and the fact that the ivy had been disturbed.

From the moment of these discoveries Holbin was a miserable man. It is a peculiar, but a well-known idiosyncrasy of the masculine nature, that whatever the man himself may bring to the marriage altar he demands that he shall meet there only immaculate purity. The realization by Holbin that fortune could be secured only by linking himself for life to Frances, who was thus proven to have compromised herself, was alone sufficient to fill him with bitterness and hatred, though it did not for a moment deter him; but by a not unnatural operation of the processes which were moulding his future he had found himself strangely influenced from the hour of their first meeting by this young girl whose future was to be linked to his. Fresh from school, her mind unformed, and with but vague ideas of real life, Frances Brookin presented that charming combination of knowledge and ingenuousness which makes the girl-woman forever irresistible to men of experience. Himself accomplished and versatile, he set about the pleasant task of winning her confidence, and he might perhaps have succeeded but for over-assiduousness and the wonderful intuition of the feminine mind. The unwelcome results of his efforts were that within two weeks he had fatally alarmed her and as fatally involved himself. For the first time in his life he was genuinely in love.

It was at this time that Doctor Brodnar, hovering around his aged patient, discovered the drift of affairs, and, becoming aware of the infamy planned through the will, privately took control of Frances and revealed to her the plot of which she was to be the victim. From that moment Frances turned from Holbin as from a criminal, and Holbin was piqued to court her with a fiercer jealousy.

It was to this heart, consumed by a hopeless passion, that the revelation made by Louise had winged its flight like a shaft of flame. Try as he might, he could not in the face of corroborating facts con-

vince himself that she spoke altogether falsely or labored under a complete hallucination. Yet looking with the eyes of memory into the open, placid face of Frances, he could not, he would not accept the inevitable conclusion forced upon him by Louise. Such was his frame of mind on the day of the funeral, when he remained at the Brookin residence, perhaps his only opportunity to make an examination of Frances's apartments. Before the carriages had reached the cemetery he turned the latch and entered her deserted bedroom.

The appointments of this room were few but tasteful. It abounded in the little belongings of a young girl. To-day there were many evidences of a scene which had defeated good order. A jaunty hat and bright ribbons were hastily thrown aside, and the open bureau-drawers revealed dainty laces and lingerie. But the eyes of the inquisitive intruder took notice of none of these things; they were riveted instantly to an object that lay beside a book upon the centre-table near which stood an arm-chair. That object was a slender cigar. He took it up,—answered. He knew that in the Brookin household he was the only smoker—and he did not smoke slender cigars. To the mind of this man, ever open to suspicions and suggestions of evil, that strange cigar was testimony unimpeachable. It was the knife in the heart of a jealous love. With inexpressible rage, and with a fierce hatred of every living thing, he placed the weed in his own case. Here, then, he reasoned, had the man described by Louise been sitting before the dawn of that fatal day; here had the little saint kneeled to place her arms about him and say farewell! Yonder was the window, straight ahead, from which Louise had fired. Brave, faithful Louise! His heart warmed towards her, despite the fact that she had fired to kill him. Somewhere in that crimson carpet was the blood of her victim if her aim had been true. Was it true? He glanced back over his shoulder; the ball would have struck the wall behind him had she missed her aim. And there in the wall, a little out of line it is true, was a small hole. Amazed, he hurriedly examined it. The shot, after all, had missed.

Then this doubt came to the active mind: Why had the man been carried away if the shot failed?

Holbin went quickly to his own room, where he secured a candle and a powerful sun-glass. Holding the latter over the perforation in the plastering, he discovered a slight red stain.

"Blood!" he whispered; "she did not miss!" Opening his pen-knife, he carefully cut a section from the broken plaster. "Whoever the man was, he was struck in the head. Here is hair."

For a few moments Holbin was deep in thought. Then he drew from his pocket the pistol which he had taken from Louise and examined it with the eye of an army expert. Apparently puzzled, he

tried the depth of the hole in the plastering with a pencil and found that the perforation was complete. Plaster and lathe had both been penetrated. He seated himself in the arm-chair facing the window. If Frances had been kneeling with her back to the window, the face of the unknown man must have been fully exposed. The weapon did not have power enough to fire a bullet through the head of a man, an inch of plaster, and a lathe, and to carry away hair and blood,—the bullet must have glanced from the side of the head. The position of the whole indicated that the right side of the man's head had been struck.

Holbin's final conclusions were that the stranger had been only stunned. His friends could not have concealed his death, for no common man would have won the privileges of the room, nor would it have been possible for Frances to have borne herself so calmly with the memory of a murder fresh in her mind. "A society man is missing from his club in Richmond to-day!" he said aloud. "The mystery is half solved. As for you, my lovely bride!"—he finished the sentence with a smothered oath.

VII.

THE influences of established principles and correct associations may carry an ordinary man to success in proper channels, but the successful villain is necessarily an intellectual being. In his room Holbin gradually evolved from his discoveries the conclusion that he had an active enemy near at hand, and that a plot was thickening about him. Yet who was there in Richmond that knew enough of his history to place a finger upon the blackest spot in his life? And why the enmity? Two theories presented themselves, and two only,—love for Frances Brookin and love for the Brookin wealth. Since it was clear that the girl had been too long secluded and too recently grown to have formed many friendships in Richmond, evidently the money was the potent influence in the secret operations about him. But who had been shot, and why?

Holbin labored under the immense disadvantage of a man with out intimate friends. He had gravitated rapidly during his short stay in the city towards the fast set; men classed him quickly as "sporty," and women looked on him with doubt. People who had at heart the interests of the latter looked even more coldly upon the debonaire man of the world. The fact that he was the son of Mrs. John Brookin was a disadvantage, for society had never been enamoured of the successor to the gentle little lady who once presided over the Brookin mansion. Intimates he had, but friends none. In his perplexity over the mystery into which he had been plunged Holbin turned at length to Doctor Brodnar. He had seen the Doctor upon rare occasions only, and in some way he had understood that he was not favorably regarded by

Mrs. Brookin; but the basis of this lady's dislikes was, as he knew, not legitimate. Doctor Brodnar, in succeeding to his father's practice some years before, had in a way inherited old Mr. Brookin, and that individual had firmly resisted his new wife's efforts to substitute her own physician for him. The Doctor was a distant relative of the dead wife, one of the few links which bound the old man to a happy past; and as people grow old they dislike new family physicians.

No one is quicker to recognize a straightforward, honest man than one who is himself dishonest and tricky. Holbin estimated Brodnar as a clear-headed, blunt, impolitic fellow, beyond the comprehension of plots and counterplots,—a man to be used if his confidence could be gained. He was, most likely, in a position to serve him; for it was Raymond's conclusion that the shortest way to arrive at the truth of the shooting lay in the discovery of the wounded man. And if the victim were not actually Brodnar's patient, Brodnar might easily identify him. It was a tribute to Richmond's popular physician that Holbin decided at once that the best chance for success lay in a seemingly frank and open statement of the main facts. The doubtful point was Louise. Brodnar had been present at the reading of the will when the question concerning her was asked; but, he concluded, over hastily, Brodnar could hardly know anything about her beyond the name that had been uttered. He determined, with a gambler's quick decision, to play the stake, supposing that if he did not win his loss would be small.

He entered the Doctor's office upon the afternoon of the funeral, and presently the door between the inner and outer offices opened. Brodnar stood upon the threshold looking at him. At once Holbin remarked a singular expression in the physician's face. Afterwards he recalled the fact that Brodnar reached back and closed the door behind him.

"Doctor," he began, disregarding the other's stiffness and formality, "I have called to consult with you on certain matters of a private nature directly affecting the family with which we both, to some extent, are connected. Have you a few moments to spare me?" The Doctor's face had darkened perceptibly and was turned aside for a moment.

"I am afraid, sir," he said at length, "that you have made a mistake. I am not qualified to advise you in any respect. I know of nothing affecting the Brookin family—I suppose you refer to the Brookins—in which we could have a common interest. Good-evening, sir." He turned as if to re-enter the room behind him. Holbin stood with an angry flush upon his face. He recognized instantly that a friendly service from the Doctor was now out of the question; but service under moral compulsion might yet be had.

"Perhaps you are right," he said, seeking to adopt the other's

freezing dignity. "And yet you may be mistaken,—that is, over-hasty. And perhaps, Doctor, you do not realize that I am not asking a personal favor at your hands."

"You will have to excuse me." Again the Doctor placed his hand upon the door-knob and prepared to depart.

"I am then to understand," said Holbin, a distinct sneer in his voice, "that you Brookin people prefer that affairs touching the family honor shall be passed upon by strangers. I have come to you, sir, with a serious matter, as in duty bound. The reception met with is such that for the future I shall rely upon my own judgment." With a fine show of heat he took up his hat and cane, and with no pretense of a bow was turning away when he felt the Doctor's hand laid not lightly upon his shoulder, and his stern voice:

"Explain yourself, sir."

"Unless I am much mistaken," he said, showing his white teeth slightly, "that has been the very thing you refused me permission to do."

"Sit down!" Holbin was not a man easily intimidated when conscious that he held winning cards. He read the bluff Doctor easily, and knew that he was disturbed.

"I must preface my remarks," he began, "by the statement that I am not at liberty to give you the name of my informant in these matters."

"Are you aware, then, that you become responsible should you repeat them?"

"I am aware of no such rule," said Holbin,—“at least, none that applies to me in this instance; I am most directly affected, since the circumstances involve the good name of Frances Brookin, of whom by her father's will I was made a life-long protector. I shall defend her to the best of my ability, but I think some of her people ought to be willing to share the responsibility. It must not be forgotten that it is by no means settled that I shall accept the propositions of Mr. Brookin's remarkable will."

"That, I must confess, had not occurred to me," said Doctor Brodnar.

"Really? It has not occurred to you that a gentleman may not be purchased like so much merchandise?"

"Do you mean to insinuate, sir, that you did not seek to marry Frances Brookin?" Doctor Brodnar arose, and the question burst from him indignantly; but, restraining himself, he looked towards the inner door and lowered his voice, an action that did not escape his visitor's notice.

"I insinuate nothing. My mother perhaps made a request in my name, but without my knowledge or consent. I have had no chance

to decline the alliance, were I so disposed. The arrangement, however, seems to me an excellent one, and I sincerely trust that nothing has happened or will happen to defeat it."

"In the name of God, man, what are you driving at?"

"A man was shot night before last upon our premises and spirited away, whether living or dead it is not known. My informant thinks he is living."

"Who told you such a thing?" The words came almost as a whisper from the astonished Doctor.

"He was shot from a window while in the wing-room which opens into the garden. He was struck on the right side of his head."

"Go on!" said the physician after a pause, and making desperate efforts to be calm. "Let us see how far this wretched informant of yours has lied."

"Lied? So upon the impulse of the moment I too believed. But the fame of a woman is sacred, Doctor Brodnar, and this morning I went into that room. Upon the wall in the rear, a little out of line from the window to the chair, in which, it is said, the man who was shot had been sitting, was a bullet mark. On the jagged edges of the hole in the plaster were a few hairs and traces of blood." Holbin unfolded a little package upon the table as he spoke. "Place these under a microscope and verify my statement." Again the Doctor was silent; but the look he gave his visitor was so passionately threatening that Holbin paused.

"Go on!" again the command was little more than a whisper.

"There is but one thing more: upon the table I found this cigar, laid aside without having been lit."

"Have you finished?" Holbin looked up, uneasy and surprised.

"Yes."

"Now what would you have of me?"

"I wish you to find out for me the name of the man who was in that room."

"I will get you his name upon one condition."

"And that is?"

"That you will tell me the name of the woman who fired the shot."

Holbin could not, try as he might, conceal the start these words provoked.

"I do not know of any woman in the case," he said.

"I know that you do."

"Doctor Brodnar!"

Holbin sprang to his feet with well-affected rage. The Doctor continued:

"Only a woman's tracks marked the soil under that window at dawn the morning after that shot was fired. When I next saw the

spot the tracks had been carefully obliterated." Brodnar was still standing and spoke rapidly, as though he feared that he could not restrain himself. Suddenly a bland smile spread over his face. "The fact is," he said, "the shot was fired at me. Does that surprise you?" Holbin's face showed that it did. "The final attack of which Mr. Brookin died," continued the Doctor, "was momentarily expected. I spent the night sitting in the poor girl's room at her request, to be within call, her old nurse asleep upon the rug. You may believe this or not, Mr. Holbin, but take my suggestion, and if you doubt the explanation conceal your frame of mind. By the way, lift the lid of the box there on my table; now compare the cigar that you found with those in the box. You perceive that they are exactly alike. I am not accustomed to offer proof of my statements, but I make an exception in your favor, as you are almost a stranger. As for the pretty theory of the pistol-ball carrying blood and hair into the plastering, it evidently springs from an overheated imagination. Blood there is none; and, for the hair, you will find that in all good plaster. But to conclude the matter, Mr. Holbin: if a bullet had taken a piece of my scalp into the wall, the wound would not have healed within two days, and if you will examine my head carefully you will find that none of the scalp is missing." The Doctor lowered his head and moved it accommodately from side to side.

"Have you any suspicion as to the name of the woman who fired this shot—at you?" asked Holbin sarcastically.

"A very strong suspicion; with me it amounts now to a certainty. She is a woman who dwells in the Brookin house, and the only mystery left is, how the devil did she get up to the window?" This time Holbin's astonishment was genuine.

"I do not understand."

"She is a woman whose plans might have been defeated had the man who was dimly seen in that room been any other than myself. Not to be misunderstood in the matter, permit me to explain that in my opinion the woman who fired that shot was your mother!" Holbin's first impulse was to denounce the Doctor, as a social duty, and take the chances of a personal encounter, but the value of the honest error into which Brodnar had fallen flashed upon him. He affected to understand that the Doctor was making the statement as to himself and Mrs. Brookin in a sense not to be taken as earnest, but to be construed as a refusal to explain the mystery. At this moment, when Holbin was taking up his hat and cane to depart, the Doctor's assistant within the private room threw the door wide open, and Holbin discovered a man propped in an arm-chair with his head bandaged. The man's back was turned towards the departing guest, and he saw him but one instant. Doctor Brodnar hurriedly closed the door.

"This, sir," said Holbin in a rage, "is infamous! I demand the name of that person."

"Ask your mother, sir."

"I shall have satisfaction for this, Doctor Brodnar! I shall publish these facts!" Brodnar looked upon him with inexpressible contempt. Then a grim smile came and dwelt upon his lips.

"As I understand it," he said, "you must marry to obtain a fortune. If you find satisfaction in blackening the name of some woman, indulge yourself as much as you please; but if you value your life don't venture to handle the name of Frances Brookin in public. If I have no objection to being shot at by mistake while discharging the duties of a family physician, I don't see why you should be rushing around trying to find some man who is not a family physician and who was shot with malice-aforethought. Take my advice, Mr. Holbin," and the Doctor's voice lost its playful tone; "don't turn a comedy into a tragedy."

Holbin left the room without a word more. The physician stood a moment in deep thought. The smile returned to his face. "Poor devil!" he said, "his hands are tied." Notwithstanding this decision, he immediately sent a note to Frances informing her that Raymond Holbin had discovered some of the facts connected with the tragedy. He assured her that she had no reasons for apprehension, and outlined his interview with Holbin.

VIII.

LEAVING the physician's office, Holbin made his way through the streets, where excited crowds were discussing the approaching conflict. He went to his room. It is true he had gained no profitable information concerning the unknown, yet—and the thought consoled him to some extent—he had made two important discoveries: Brodnar was his enemy, and the shooting had really occurred. But who was the man, and why should Brodnar seek to shield him? For the first time then it dawned upon Holbin that Brodnar was the friend who came to the rescue of the wounded man and bore him away. Everything corroborated Louise, and if Louise spoke from a clear memory, then Frances had been observed tenderly parting from the man she loved. This mental conclusion filled him with rage, despite the fact that he did not and could not believe the girl guilty of serious error. Common sense told him also that Brodnar would not have been a party to a scandal and the protector of a guilty participant. It was a bad hour that Holbin gave to his dilemma in the privacy of his own room. In his doubt and distress he thought often of his mother, who had Richmond society at her finger ends, and whose clear, incisive mind could pierce the mystery if it could be pierced. But he hesitated at this stage. There were other secrets besides that which baffled him, and he was not prepared to admit the presence of Louise in Richmond.

But why not Frances? No explanations were necessary there; and she was young and, of course, easily frightened. He went at once to her room, and upon the plea of urgent necessity forced his way in. He found her with her cheeks wet with tears and instantly full of resentment. She remained standing while he was in the room.

"I have a matter of great importance, Frances, to discuss with you in private, and much as I dislike to be guilty of intrusion there seems to be no help for it." She had regained her calmness by a desperate effort.

"To you, Mr. Holbin, I am always Miss Brookin, and there cannot possibly be any subject in which we are jointly interested so important as to necessitate immediate discussion."

"I am sorry if I shall appear abrupt," he said, "but there is a subject, and there is no time to waste. Night before last a man sat in this chair, you kneeled in front of him, and someone fired through the window, wounding him in the head. The ball glanced into the plastering back there, and the man was carried away by Doctor Brodnar, who is now treating him in his rooms. I demand the name of that man and your reasons for admitting him into this house."

"Mr. Holbin!"

Frances, although forewarned, was but a girl, and could not keep the tell-tale blood from her face.

"Do not attempt to deceive me. Give me the name and your reasons."

"By what right do you demand this, sir?" Her voice steadied as she looked him fearlessly in the eyes.

"By the right which your father's will confers. For if you take one course under that will, this property is his widow's, my mother's; and if you take the other——"

"In the meantime," she said coldly, "I have several years in which to decide, and during those years neither you nor your mother can drive me from this house."

"Drive you, Frances!"

"Miss Brookin!"

"Come, this is folly! I am, whether willing or unwilling, the present head of this family, or at least this household. All Richmond will hold me responsible for everything that happens here contrary to propriety, and I must insist that you explain this most remarkable occurrence. Do not force me to ask assistance of the police, and thus make the matter public." The girl did not flinch.

"I am not afraid that you will do that, Mr. Holbin; you have too much at stake. Doctor Brodnar, besides, has told you that he was in this room, and Richmond will want to know why, if there is anything wrong afoot, you do not hold him responsible. No one has been in

this room—until now—except by my consent, and if any crime has been committed, the criminals are probably better known to you than to anyone else. I am totally in the dark; I have no idea why anyone, especially a woman, should attempt to shoot a friend of mine here.”

“A woman! Who told you a woman did it?”

“My own eyes. I saw her tracks; and now, sir, *who told you?* Was it the woman?”

Holbin laughed silently.

“You play that as though it were trump,” he said. “Perhaps no woman’s tracks have ever been there but yours. It is your garden.”

“Only, I saw them before I made any tracks there,” she said quietly.

“I don’t question your honesty, Miss Brookin, but others might; and if people were disposed to judge you unkindly they would simply suggest that you had a powerful motive.” To this she disdained a reply. She had picked up Brodnar’s letter from the table and moved away, seeing which he said persistently: “You will please answer my question. I dislike greatly to annoy you, but my duty is imperative. Your secret will be safe with me; and I must protect the name of my future wife,—that you will admit.”

“Your wife? Have you supposed for a moment, sir, that I shall ever become your wife?” Frances came back and stood before him. “Why, Mr. Holbin, there is not wealth enough in Virginia to bring about that!”

“Miss Brookin,”—and Holbin sank his voice to the most courteous of tones, and met her glances without embarrassment,—“why is it that you dislike me?”

“I have not given the matter a thought, sir. I simply accept the fact.” He was silent a moment, his eyes cast down.

“You hate my mother,” he said sadly and bitterly, “and I am included; I understand that. But admitting that you have cause to hate her,—and I do not,—you have none to hate me. Consider the injustice. Let me say now,—I did not expect ever to say it, but a man is no man who will not defend himself,—let me say now that, so far from having cause to hate me, if profound respect, if sympathy for your loneliness, if genuine affection and the tenderest love count for anything with a woman, you have more than sufficient cause to think well of me.” Frances looked upon him with amazement, touched in spite of her resolution. He was not slow to perceive this. “My mother,” he continued, “is not from the world’s stand-point a lovable woman, but she is—my mother; and I am her son. She is self-willed; but she is just. Shall I admit it to you? She has made my life unhappy; she has been the cause of my living abroad——”

“Who was Louise, then? And why should the mention of her

name—have killed my father?" She covered her face with her hands, and gave way gently to her tears. He waited a few moments until she regained her composure.

"There are turned down pages in the lives of all men, Miss Brookin,—and in the lives of some women. Another time I shall tell you the history of Louise, and let you judge me if you will. But I swear to you now as though I stood in the presence of God, that I did not lead her off by means of a mock marriage,—I did not! You may not understand it, but there are times when the man is not alone to blame in these matters. He is involved through his chivalry; and in trying to protect a woman he sometimes ruins both the woman and himself. I have sinned, but if you knew how I have suffered you would pity, not blame me. Complete reparation was impossible,—but I have done my best; and to-day my life is as free from evil as most men's."

In no other way could Holbin have so touched the girl's heart. At the moment she did pity him. Recent scenes in her own life rose before her as he had spoken. She turned to him, generous and impulsive.

"Forgive me if I have misjudged *you*." The words surprised and alarmed her. He was not slow to see his opportunity and take advantage of it.

"If you misjudged me, it was natural; for never was a man more unfortunately situated to achieve the dearest wish of his heart than I am."

"Your dearest wish——" she began.

"The wish to make you my wife, Frances; you will think it a very natural wish under the circumstances surrounding us, I am afraid, and yet, whatever may have been my mother's interest in your father's will, I knew nothing whatever of it. Why, I have been here a few weeks only. And do you suppose for one moment that I could share in any property extorted from you by such strange circumstances? I am not the heir, if you refuse to marry me, but I may help you, and I will. My dear girl, upon the day you are twenty-one if I am sure that you do not wish to take your property with the encumbrance of a husband, I shall in writing *decline to marry you*."

"Oh, Mr. Holbin!"

"For the rest,—this miserable mystery,—you are answered already. If I believed that you were in any way compromised, I would not admit that I love you——!"

"Please! please do not——!"

"I could not even remain in this city and doubt you. But as a man who has seen many a woman the innocent victim of mistakes and bad advice, I am bound to use every endeavor to protect your own and my mother's interests. This Doctor Brodnar——"

"He is my friend! Don't speak ill of him!"

"I speak ill of no one. But I warn you that he is absolutely unfit to advise a girl. Headstrong, opinionated, arrogant, he stakes everything upon his own judgment, and when such a man loses, he loses for others besides himself. Frankly, I have seen men by the ten thousand until one man's face anywhere indicates the moral tribe to which he belongs; and I tell you Doctor Brodnar may be true to one friend at the expense of another——"

"I cannot listen if you accuse him."

"I shall not accuse him. I shall only say that I now demand nothing of you, but I ask you as a man whose tenderest solicitude is for you, to inform me of the mysterious occurrence in this room. Will you?" Frances was embarrassed; but she looked up at length with a kinder look in her face than he had yet seen.

"There is nothing I may tell you," she said, "but this: I am sorry, sincerely sorry, that I have misjudged you, and I think you are generous and kind to me."

"For that I thank you. And now again forgive me for having troubled you to-day: the matter seemed a pressing one. Will you,—will you still insist on the 'Miss Brookin'? May I not sometimes say 'Frances'?"

"It matters little," she said at length. But when he was gone she reviewed her action with growing wonder. "What possessed me,—what influenced me to yield so much?" she asked herself over and over. She was too young to know that a mystery was involved in that question as old as the human race.

IX.

THE momentary happiness which his unexpected impression upon Frances brought to Holbin soon gave place to jealous rage. It was impossible for him to rest satisfied. He told himself that the war was on; that he had been wonderfully successful in his contact with the secret foe, and that victory was still possible. He went forth blindly into the city, seeking information of an unknown wounded man, but, of course, no explanation was forthcoming, for the reason that no one knew of such a man. At dark he sought the policeman whose beat was nearest the Brookin residence.

Pistol-shot? Oh, yes; he had heard pistol-shots every night since the war fever came on; the town was full of excitement. And the officer remembered also that recently a carriage had been twice driven furiously upon his street near daylight,—the incident had impressed him because the hour was that in which the city was usually quietest. He had been under the impression that the carriage belonged to Doctor Brodnar, and he had satisfied himself with the reflection that some

sudden illness had made the speed necessary. "Why," he asked, "is there anything wrong afoot?" Raymond assured him that there was not and passed on, leaving the officer convinced to the contrary.

All the facts Holbin had gathered now confirmed Louise, but he had reached the limit of his powers except in one direction. "Mammy" was the last witness, and he hesitated long because of her relation to Frances. Finally, in desperation he privately summoned her to his room. The woman stood looking curiously at him as he charged back and forth across the floor until he paused and confronted her.

"You are called mammy I believe," he said sternly.

"Yes, sah!" Mammy was startled and amazed.

"You are, of course, aware that you now belong to my mother, and that I have charge of all her property."

"Huccum, sah, I b'long to yo' ma? I done b'long ter ole miss, an' she gi' me 'specially to Miss Frances!" Mammy adjusted her glasses and looked at him anxiously.

"That makes no difference, woman. We recognize no will in this house that conflicts with my mother's! I want you to answer my questions now and conceal nothing, or it will be an unfortunate day for you, old as you are! Where were you night before last?" Mammy was astounded. No one ever addressed her in such a manner. She had long been a privileged character. True, since the coming of the second Mrs. Brookin she had lost much of her prestige, but she still held sway over the servants; and in the wing she reigned supreme.

"I was out to see my daughter what is hired to Doctor Brodnar, an' her husband, he b'longs ter de Doctor, sah, an' tends de horses."

"When did you return?" Mammy looked critically at her questioner and waited. "Answer me!"

"Oh, I come erlong back nex' day, sah."

"At what time—at what time?"

"Long 'bout daylight, I reckon, sah."

"Where was your Miss Frances when you came?"

"Where was Miss Frances? Where you reckon Miss Frances gointer be bout daylight but in bed?"

"In bed, was she?"

"Yes, sah; an' sleepin' like er fed kitten. What for you askin' me 'bout young miss?"

"Answer my questions. Where did your daughter's husband spend the night?"

"He spen' de night wid de Doctor, 'course;—comin' an' goin' to sick folks des like 'e always do!"

"Did he have the carriage out?"

"Course he hed de kerridge out!" Holbin walked the floor, more and more disturbed. He adopted a more gentle method.

"Mammy, how long have you been with this family?"

"Ole marster—way back yonder—gi' me to ole miss when she was born; an' ole miss gi' me ter Miss Frances, sah. Been hyah always!"

"Nothing on earth could tempt you to say or do anything that would endanger your young mistress, of course."

"No, sah. Ole miss say, day she die, 'Mammy, take cyar my chile; an' I hole 'er han' an' promise."

"Do you know that I am to marry your Miss Frances?"

"Fo' God! Who tol' you dat?"

"It was in her father's will. But you are not to speak of that,—not a word, even to her. The time will come, mammy, when I shall rely upon you to help me take care of her and make her happy. Will you help me?"

"Yes, sah. You can d'pen' on mammy night or day. But, marster, when you goin' marry Miss Frances? She ain' nithin' but er chile now."

"I know that, and that is why I am consulting with you. I am going to tell you a secret. Will you keep it? It is to help her."

"Yes, sah! I ain' goin' tell nobody, sah."

"Do you know what happened in her room night before last, mammy, while you were away?"

"What happen dere, sah?"

"A man was shot in there and desperately wounded."

"Hush!" The woman's dismay was genuine; so was her curiosity. She leaned forward eagerly. "Who dat done shot 'im?"

"I don't know."

"Who de man got shot?"

"I don't know that. Was there nothing wrong about the room when you came back?" He saw the quick intelligence in her face; and then the African cunning and secretiveness returned.

She shook her head.

"No, sah. Warn't nothin' wrong when I come." Then he played his last card.

"You know more than you will tell me; but I cannot waste any more time with you, mammy. If your mistress is arrested before morning you go back to the country for life."

"Take up my Miss Frances!" Mammy staggered and sank upon the edge of a chair.

"Yes. The man who was shot in that room is dead."

"Dead!"

"Yes. And I can do nothing. Everybody hides the facts from me."

"Young marster, you don't mean dey gointer tek up ole miss's chile?"

"I can't say positively. If I thought so, I would have her out of this city in six hours, and you with her."

Mammy came close to his arm, uttering a warning, wordless sound, and looking fearfully about her.

"De kerridge come for me in er rush des fo' day an' we took up de Doctor at es office on de way hyah. When we go in dere, Miss Frances settin' in de big chair shiverin'. He done tell me her mind b'en 'sturbed by 'er pa's dyin', an' not ter notice nothin' she say. Fus' t'ing we know I done foun' blood on 'er han's an' wrapper an' hit sho'ly skeer'd me. But he won't talk an' she won't talk—'ceptin' ter tell him somebody gointer shoot 'im fum de winder. He git out pretty quick 'bout dat time an' bimeby she go ter sleep. But she ain' been 'erse'f since; an' she des won't talk 'bout dat night! She——"

"Is that all?"

"Fo' God!"

"Do you have any idea who the man that was shot is?"

"No, sah. Ain' hyah 'em mention es name nair time."

"What young men does she know? Who visits her?"

"Nobody. She ain' been out dat yard gate sence she came home 'cep'n to run 'round ter see de Doctor or go to church or shop er little."

"Does the gate stay locked?"

"Mos' all de time locked. An' we alls keep de keys,—Miss Frances an' me."

"Mammy, you have been blind if you are telling the truth, and I think you are telling what you know. Now listen: if you wish to remain with me after I am married do just as I tell you. Go and find your daughter's husband—what is his name?"

"Joe, sah."

"Make Joe tell you all about this affair. Get back at once and come to my room. Don't speak of this matter to anyone,—don't say the man is dead. And quietly prepare to leave the city with your Miss Frances. If it becomes necessary to leave, we shall have no time to lose. Go; I rely upon you."

That night mammy knocked upon his door, fearful and nervous.

"Joe done gone, sah!" she said; "Doctor done sont him up de kentry."

X.

HOLBIN received the negro woman's report in desperation. Upon the second night after, casting aside all scruples, he went to his mother's room. She had not retired, but was busy with her correspondence, which she put aside as her son entered the door? Without seeking to read them he saw "Washington, D.C.," upon several sealed letters, a fact that he recalled later. The smile of pleasure which lit up her

severe countenance disappeared when she noted the look of anger and distress on his face.

"Well," she said, "are you still dissatisfied?" It was their first meeting alone since the death of John Brookin.

"Do not congratulate yourself too soon, mother. The game is but half played out, and we may find that strong cards are held against us."

"What do you mean by that?"

He walked the room, pausing at times before her as she sat in her arm-chair. Her gray eyes followed him. Her white face was frozen into an impenetrable mask. He described the occurrences of the last few days, and made a clean breast of it all, reserving only certain facts in connection with his experience with Louise, among which was the existence of a child. These reservations he mentally classed as irrelevant.

It is not likely that Raymond's confessions greatly surprised his mother. She was, in fact, already familiar with most of his history. The disturbing elements of his statement were the dangerous character of Louise and the astounding circumstances of the shooting. Yet these drew from Mrs. Brookin no comment, no evidence of excitement or dismay. She regarded her son silently and sternly for a few moments, then dropped into a chair. A flush at length overspread her white face. Raymond knew that it was the advance-wave of a tide of anger and hesitated when she ordered him to ring the bell. She arose calmly, and crossing the room pulled the bell-cord as deliberately as though to summon her carriage. A few minutes after, during which time she stood rigidly looking down on her son, William, the butler, appeared.

"Go to Doctor Brodnar immediately," she said, "and tell him to come to me; that Miss Frances is desperately ill."

"Mother!"

She waved the servant away and turned upon her son with unrestrained anger. "Do you think that I fear him? Do you think that I shall sit quietly by and let him introduce people into this house—into my step-daughter's room—in the night and entangle us in his plots? Oh, that I were a man!" She was now a caged tigress, and giving freedom to long-suppressed fury. "It would be nothing less than the cowhide!"

"You forget Frances."

"I forget nothing! I realize, on the contrary, sir, that both Frances and her Doctor are at my mercy now. He dare not betray her! And this comes of your shameful dallying with that woman,—you!—my son!—the puppet, the plaything, the slave of a——"

"Wait, mother! You forget yourself, at least,—and me. I am not a child. A little more, and I shall leave this house not to enter it

again. I have made mistakes; but even you shall not throw them up to me. Be careful what you say,—and be careful of Frances. Prove her guilty of any crime, and you defeat your own plans.”

No amount of pleading, no love or affection on the part of her boy, could have swayed the tempestuous woman as quickly as open defiance. In such moments he resembled the one human being whose fiery temper and relentless brutality had ever awed her. Raymond played his part well: “You shall not denounce me for one infamy only to link me to another.”

“If you had shown such spirit with Brodnar,” she said bitterly.

“If I had! Words—blows—a duel! Then the truth would have come out. To accept the responsibilities of the will afterwards would be contemptible. No, mother, you women see but one side of such a matter. What would become of us should Louise make herself known? Start the police upon this matter, and they will ferret her out.”

“Why have you not taken her away? You have been imprudent in delaying that.”

“Nervous prostration. I have a nurse with her. To-morrow, if she may travel, I shall get her out of the city. For God’s sake give me time to do that. You have no idea what you are risking.”

“Doctor out, ma’am,” said William, returning at this moment. “Young Doctor say he will sen’ ’im roun’ des soon as he come back,—dere now! front do’ bell ringin’ dis minute like somebody tryin’ to pull it tru’ de do’. Dat’s de Doctor ev’ytme.”

“Stand behind the portière in my dressing-room,” said the mother to her son, who was preparing to depart, “and under no circumstances let yourself be seen!” Almost immediately Doctor Brodnar entered the room.

“You sent for me, madam,” he began. “Where is Frances?”

“Asleep, I suppose. I have been guilty of a fiction, but my intentions are good. Doctor Brodnar, who was the man you took from my house wounded, and for what purpose was he here? I demand an instant answer!”

“I decline to make any statement, madam, touching my professional business or to discuss this matter with you. Good-evening.”

“Hold, sir, or I shall place the affair in the hands of the police.”

“Hardly, I think. But proceed in that way if you prefer. Good-evening.”

“You think that I am afraid of publicity; wait and see! I shall denounce you, sir, over my own signature. I shall make your name a foot-ball for scandal-mongers in every town in this State.”

“And how about your son’s, madam? You desire above all things that Raymond Holbin shall marry your step-daughter and inherit under the will of the man you coddled and bullied out of his senses. The

name of the man who was shot I shall not tell you, but I will tell you the name of the woman who shot him,—I thought you were the woman. I was mistaken, and for this error I owe you an apology.”

“This is infamous!”

“I was mistaken, I say, honestly. For I thought that the woman who would retreat from her dying husband, appealing to her with his heart in his eyes, who would link an orphan girl to a libertine, might easily pull a trigger to remove a lesser obstacle.” The woman rushed up to him with hands clenched.

“Scoundrel! If I had the weapon now, I would prove your judgment! Out of my house!” Doctor Brodnar smiled wickedly.

“I was mistaken,” he continued coolly; “the woman who shot this unknown gentleman lies, half delirious, in room 28 at the Spotswood, and her name is Louise. And, madam, I will do her full justice; she erred in her information and her aim. For the man she hoped to destroy was this libertine, cashiered, swindling, cheating son of yours. Denounce me, but breathe a word against the fame of Frances Brookin, and I shall go before Richmond with my cause. Good-evening.”

He bowed mockingly, and was turning away when the portière was flung violently aside and Holbin rushed on him from behind. A keen knife in his hand flashed in the gas-light and fell, but once only. Maddened with the pain and enraged at the cowardly attack, Brodnar lifted his assailant from the floor and hurled him across the room. He fell in a heap against the wall, the knife rolling to the feet of the frantic woman. To snatch it up and throw herself upon the athlete was an instant's action; but she was impotent to harm him then. He seized her wrists and turned the right one slowly but remorselessly. Her pale lips uttered no sound, but the long white fingers relaxed at length under the terrific ordeal and the knife fell to the floor. Kicking it across the room, he pushed the woman away, and stepping outside the door, closed it behind him. He heard the furious ringing of the butler's bell, and soon beheld William running clumsily through the hall. He had opened the front door, but the servant having passed, he changed his mind, and slamming the door made his way down and back to the wing occupied by Frances. She had retired, but arose at once.

“Bring your key and let me out at the gate,” he said, “and quickly.” She threw on her wrapper and wonderingly obeyed. “I have found the other woman in the case,” he continued hurriedly as they traversed the garden. “It is all very sad, my child, and too late now to be remedied.” He could not see the girl's face nor understand that there was room for any misconstruction of his statement: that her mind was occupied with Richard Somers, as his had been with Holbin. Frances felt as though the blood was freezing in her veins.

“What woman?”

"The woman who did the shooting!"

"Why—why,—what was her motive?"

"Jealousy!" he replied briefly. "What I want to say to you is this: something has happened to-night that will prevent my returning here. You must come to see me occasionally, and always when needing advice or help. In the mean time, keep up your courage. Nobody can disturb the big fact in our case. We have the law on our side; I shall explain it all sometime. And our wounded friend—you don't ask of him—is better and impatient. He will leave Richmond to-night. Good-by."

"Oh, wait!" cried the girl in anguish. "The woman,—where is she?"

"At the Spotswood and ill." He felt the blood running from a stab in his shoulder down his arm, and fearful of the effect should the excited girl discover that he was wounded, he hurried away to his assistant. Frances waited at the gate, her face in her hands, her heart aching. With a sudden and despairing resolution she went back to her room.

"Quick, mammy, help me dress; I must go to the hotel!"

"Lord 'a' mussy, chile, what de matter?"

"Help me, mammy,—quick! Don't ask me any questions."

Frances started away, wringing her hands and sobbing, but in the crowded streets, where men were cheering and cannon firing over the announcement that Virginia had seceded, and thousands of torch-lights blazed the way, she grew firmer. The general excitement was in her favor and no one attached importance to her visit. She reached and entered the sick woman's room, and, motioning away the hired nurse, dropped upon her knees by the bedside. Louise, calmer under the opiates administered by the Doctor, regarded her as she might have one descended from the clouds. Something like a spasm of fear passed over her, for in the lovely face beside her she seemed to see the image of her own youth repeated.

"Who are you?" she asked wildly.

"Your friend. Don't excite yourself."

"Your name? your name?"

"Frances Brookin! And, oh, I am so sorry for you, so very sorry!" Louise seemed to have heard only the name, which she repeated softly, wondering.

"Frances Brookin! And your father,—who was he?"

"John Brookin."

"Ah, my God!" And the face upon the pillow was turned away in shame and confusion. After a while she looked back, a strange light in her eyes.

"What do you want of me?" she asked suspiciously.

"I wanted to tell you," said Frances, covering her face and sobbing anew, "that I didn't know—of you! That if I had, no power on

earth could have won my consent. Oh, I have been deceived—cruelly, cruelly.”

Louise, who was ignorant that Frances was the girl in the room at the time of the shooting, now saw her opportunity. She raised herself eagerly.

“You are not my rival then. You came only in pity.”

“Yes. And to ask your forgiveness. You have nothing to fear from me.” A glad light filled the eyes of Louise. She could with difficulty restrain herself and control her voice.

“I believe you,” she said. “You will not take him from me,—from his child!”

“His child!” Frances was shocked and dismayed. “His child! Is there a child?—of his?”

“Yes,” said Louise, “but if you reveal that I shall never be allowed to see her again. You will not tell, will you?”

“No,” said the wretched girl. “Your secret is safe with me. And, oh, I believed in him,—I trusted him so!” She wrung her hands and turned away her face.

“It is fortunate you found him out in time,” said Louise; “with me, it was too late,—too late! But please do not stay here. How did you find me out?”

“The Doctor. He told me about you. He has told me everything, and I wanted to see you.”

“Don’t cry, my dear child. What seems a great sorrow to you now is really a blessing. You have made a miserable woman happy by your coming. Go now! He may enter at any moment, and it would be painful. Go, and don’t tell anyone of this visit. Will you promise?”

“I shall keep your secret,” said Frances. “It is safe with me. Forgive me—if I have made you unhappy.”

“I am sorry for you,” said Louise simply. Frances lifted her head proudly.

“You need not be. I am shocked and mortified; that is all. Tomorrow I shall cease to remember him.” She was going when Louise called her back.

“Let me see your face again, my child. Ah, how beautiful you are! Good-by, I trust you. Don’t grieve about him. He cannot ever be trusted. You were to be the victim of a plot, and your friends are deceiving you. Why, the man is poor; ruined, unless he gets your fortune. He came from Europe to marry you;—ah, God, he deserted me, he betrayed his child,—for your money. Trust none of them, for they are desperate. They take advantage of your youth;—they would persuade you into a hurried marriage——”

“But I could not, I could not be bound legally by such a travesty,—such a fraud!”

"Your fortune would, and that is what he wants,—that, and not you. Secure in that, he would be willing to let you go forever. Oh, but I know him. Give him the shadow of a title to your fortune and you are lost!"

"But to think that Doctor Brodnar could have deceived me so!—my mother's friend! I cannot, I cannot believe it!"

"My child, trust no one. Possibly the Doctor himself was deceived; it has been long since he knew him; and the man is a finished actor. Trust no man. The man who will not deceive a woman for his own advantage does not live. I know the world. If I do not, who does?" Frances took the hand of the sick woman in both of her own and held it in silent sympathy and grief.

"I must leave you," she said brokenly. "Will you not tell me your name? I shall always remember you in my prayers." Louise half raised herself in the bed.

"My name! Then he did not tell you all. No, my child, do not seek to find out my name. Pray for me, if you will:—and remember me as a woman more sinned against than sinning. Good-night and good-by."

As Frances hurried homeward, choking and sick with her sorrow, she found herself caught in the whirls and eddies of a great crowd and borne along helplessly past her street. Men carried torches and were cheering themselves hoarse, while horns added their din to the confusion. Upon every hat were the red letters "M.M." It was a demonstration by the famous "Minute Men," who rose in every Southern city as they had risen nearly one hundred years before when the drums beat. Suddenly she was jammed against a carriage, the progress of which had been stayed by the crowd. Its sole occupant was a pale, silent man. In the glare of the torches his face exactly filled lines indelibly fixed in her memory by the brief flame of a match; it was the face of Richard Somers, cold and immobile. Upon the seat by his side was a travelling-bag; his eyes looked out calmly, almost coldly, over her head. He was not Southern, he was not a Virginian, and the hour awoke no response within his heart. Impulsively, and forgetting, she stretched her hands upward, but memory returned and checked the words that rose to her lips. Only an inarticulate cry burst from them, a cry low and half smothered in the roar of voices. Yet low as it was, it reached the occupant of the carriage. Something in that voice, a tone, a vibration, touched a memory-cell. He turned quickly and looked back; a girl holding desperately to the arm of an old negress was being borne along by the tumultuous human wave. For one instant only he saw her white face upturned to his,—the loveliest, saddest face his eyes had ever gazed on, and from her lips he heard come back one word,—

"Farewell!" Forgetting all but that he was leaving his life somewhere in the fierce passions surging behind him, he made a desperate effort to alight from the vehicle, but so dense was the crowd the door would not open. And then angry men seized the rearing horses and forced them out of the way. When he was free again only a sea of flame, in whose depths human figures seemed to march, met his gaze. It had swallowed up the woman's white face. A great transparency, swaying and wavering like a drunken man, thrust itself before his vision and blotted out the scene. Upon it was the legend: "Down with the Yankees!"

PART III.

XI.

Sorrow unmixed with remorse is the soul's education. The soul of the woman who grieves in silence broadens and deepens, sending down into her own life far-reaching roots and unfolding upward rare auxiliary blossoms that fill the life about her with divine breathings. Such was the experience of Frances Brookin. Thrown back upon herself, conscious of innocence, and feeling always the presence of sorrow, the sorrow of a great disappointment, she saw her girlhood slipping away faster than time itself; for it is true that age is the sum of experience rather than years, and all of life may be lived between the setting and the rising of the sun. But with Frances this change was not the shrinking of the soul into forgetfulness; it was an enlargement of view and perspective in which old headlands assumed smaller proportions. New—imperative duties they seemed, arose and met her; new responsibilities presented themselves; she faced them all bravely, hopefully, lovingly. The fine quality of her soul proved itself in the casting out of all the bitterness which had in the first hours of her misfortune stormed its citadel and raised sombre banners there. The victory over self won by this frail girl was so marvellously complete that no cynicism supplanted her innocent faith in the eternal existence of truth and goodness and their ultimate triumph over evil. Her touching acceptance of life in its new aspect was not born in a day. There were weeks of anguish; there were months of dull heart-ache and loneliness; there were tear-wet pillows and nights of crying out against fate; for the death of an ideal is the saddest death in all the universe, since for this there is no resurrection. The girlish ideal of Frances Brookin was dead at last, and slept under the petals of a faded white rose. Richard Somers was out of her life, out of her heart. The man she loved had never existed, she told herself. He was a dream, a romance, an im-

maculate conception of a virgin mind. The real man was the unworthy offspring of base, worldly passions; he was nothing to her but a name.

Political events hastened the girl into womanhood and towards that large tolerance with which the strong soul at last invariably encysts the inexplicable and unwelcome facts it cannot avoid. With one leap the fierce South entered the arena of war, and Virginia hills echoed the mingled cheers of contending armies and the thunder of mighty guns. Richmond seemed to have become, as in a day, the centre of intrigue and of action. On every side flashed the gold and silver of war's rich trappings. Plumes danced in the breezes and the Confederate gray met the eye, rest where it would. From the Capitol the banner of a new nation floated proudly, and beneath it echoed the tramp of marching legions, the galloping hoof-beats of horses, through all hours of day and night. Men, in this hitherto staid old Southern city, hurried, under the spur of emotions that seemed born of a contagion in the air, and anxious women went about with willing hands to aid in every department they might invade. Among these, her life adjusting itself easily and gratefully to the new demands, was Frances Brookin, the tenderness of her fine face softened and deepened into divine womanliness, the love-ray eloquent in her melting eyes.

Swiftly the holiday side of war had faded out of view. Agonized silence swallowed up laughter. For the drift was coming in from where the storm of battle raged, wrecks of human forms once freighted with life's rarest merchandise. Soon every hospital, every available space in church and public building and the most spacious of private homes were to have their quota of the wounded, the dying, and the dead. The Southern woman was entering upon that field of labor in which she achieved her noblest dignity, her fame its immortality. Foremost among those who first gave their energies, their whole lives to the alleviation of suffering, the inspiration of the hopeless and the despairing, was Frances Brookin. Free to dispose of her time as she would, and with abundant means at her disposal, she made herself a ministering angel wherever a soldier suffered. Day and night she labored, sustained by boundless patriotism and an elation for which she could not account, try as she would. She failed in her self-analysis from ignorance of the fact that a voice that has once spoken to the heart is never quite silent afterwards, and that youth when it buries its dead tramples not the sod above it. Fiery hatred of the invader possessed her, as it did her sisters; bred in the bone and nourished with the mother's milk, it could not be quelled except by years of gentle association and a common cause; but by a strange paradox this bitterness excluded every stained and bloody blue uniform or haggard Northern face. Out of the fight, these were ever out of the sweep of a Southern woman's vengeance. Upon the suffering prisoners Frances delighted to lavish the

tenderness of her nature, now broadened and deepened by its own ministry; and something touchingly human carried her among them, although she was not conscious of it.

For this had come to pass: within the heart of Frances Brookin there lived a fiction, the Richard Somers of her girlish dreams: Richard Somers as she had seen him face to face one night under the burning match, his voice ringing strong and true and tender upon her hearing. Before him, shutting him into the sanctity of her room, she had dropped a veil of iridescent gossamer, and within that room, seen only through the veil, the man lived and reigned and had his kingdom. Through this veil too, stirred by the breath of the suffering and the dying of his own country, he spoke gently, tenderly to her in the lonely hours of her vigils. The other Richard had been dismissed, not harshly or hastily, not in anger, but sadly,—a man unworthy; a man at war with the truth and nobleness of her nature, and at war with her people. No one knows how such fictions come about, but the hearts of most women carry them.

And time had helped Frances, for looking back, she reestablished many vital facts that lessened the sadness of memory; the man must once have been noble—his deeds of mercy and gentleness proved that; innately noble he must have been when she met him, for in the face of a great temptation he had kept his promise to his friend, even to the extent of shutting his eyes against the girl whose arms had been about him, whose lips breathed love for him. And somewhere, despite all the trickery, there was still nobility, for silently he had ridden away, faithful to his friend. He had lain under her hands wounded by the pistol-shot, and no woman ever hated a helpless, suffering man. As for his deceptions, his plots, some fearful necessity must have compelled him. The other woman? She had been too base for him,—she had been at heart a murderess. She it was who had dragged him down. And was he not caring for the child? Frances would not have admitted it to herself had she realized it, but in the depths of that heart she had forgiven Richard Somers. Her heart was big enough to hold him and all his weakness. Was there a loss of something from her nature? Or was there a gain?

No message had ever come to her from Somers, no good or evil report. None? Yes, just a scrap soon after the war began. From some one, Brodnar, probably, since his name was upon it, she had received a Northern paper giving in its war gossip information that Richard Somers had been reinstated in the army and promoted to be captain of artillery.

But one day early in the spring of 1862, when the great Federal movement against Richmond was beginning and when every train was bringing in a bloody harvest, she leaned above a wounded enemy. The

question so often asked, "To what command do you belong?" drew forth an answer that filled her with excitement. She felt her heart begin to beat madly and her limbs yielding to a sudden excitement.

"Your captain! What is his name?"

"Richard Somers, miss!" How strangely thrilling sounded the name that morning! It was the first time she had heard it spoken since its bearer had said among the flickering shadows of her room,—
"If to carry in memory the living record of one face will help you, take mine, and with it, right or wrong, the love of Richard Somers." The scene, never dimmed in all the months that had passed, stood forth again, illumined like some strong picture under the swift magic of the lightning. The wounded man saw in her face the glow of its reflection. Triumph shone in her eloquent eyes, a sudden agitation locked the soft white hands.

"Do you know him, miss?"

"I? Yes, yes! Is he well—is he safe?" The man read more than she suspected, and turned his eyes away embarrassed. He was singularly helpless from his wounds, and she had his face at her mercy. Her woman's instinct discerned his thought; her lips moved without sound, but her soul was in the appealing look riveted upon him.

"I think—not," he said reluctantly, at last. "In fact, I know that he—is wounded."

"Dead!—you mean!" she gasped in the struggle to conceal her anguish.

"No, miss,—not exactly that; but badly wounded,—very badly, I am afraid."

"Where is he?" She made no effort then to conceal the truth. She was on her knees, her eyes close to his. "In God's name, my friend, tell me,—tell me all! Can't you see? can't you see?" She covered her face, unable to continue.

"I can only tell you what I know, miss. He was not dead when I saw him last. Our guns were in the line when the charge came. The line was broken on both flanks, and the yelling rebels were swarming about us. Every horse we had was down, when word came for us to look out for ourselves, and back we went to escape capture,—what was left of us. Well, miss, somebody said then that number 3 had been left loaded,—double-shotted with canister: the man at the lanyard had fallen dead just as he lifted his hand to pull. And so the gun stood, ready to be turned upon us. Then Captain Somers halted and looked about for some one to send back; but I think, miss, he must have seen that the chance was desperate. It was only an instant, and he wouldn't order any man to go: he rushed forward over the fifty yards, reached the gun, and seized the cord. He was my captain, and I couldn't leave him there, you know, so I had followed him too. Then up in front an

army of gray seemed to rise as from the ground, and they fired a volley as he pulled on the lanyard. I threw myself on my face and escaped. When I looked up, the crowd ahead was disordered and torn, but still coming on; and the Captain lay by the gun. I crawled over and laid my hand upon him.

"Tom," he said, cool as I am right now, 'I'm gone, but if you get out take the papers in my pocket and my watch to my mother!' I took them as he told me. He fainted, I think, and I was afraid he was dead, but he breathed again. And then, miss,—I hadn't tried it since I was a boy,—he was lying upon his face, and rolling over, I lay upon him, back to back, locking my arms through his. Turning over suddenly I had him on me a dead weight, and then, somehow, I got up. The whole thing was not a minute long. The rebs gave me a cheer instead of a volley till the boys rushed back to meet us. I got it in both legs then and this shoulder, and down we went. The boys took him and left me, which was right; for four men had died there to save him and I looked like the fifth." Frances was kneeling by the wounded man when he finished, stroking his cheek and brow, her frame trembling.

"Oh, brave! brave!" she cried. "God bless you and keep you—and keep you!" she sank her face beside him, sobbing for joy. "The watch,—the papers!" she cried excitedly, remembering his commission. "Oh, sir, I am his,—I am his nearest relative, South! Give them to me, give them to me!"

"In my coat," said the stranger gently, a wan smile upon his pale face. "Don't worry, miss: I guess the Captain'll pull through all right." The watch was there, and there too were the letters sealed for his mother ready for delivery if he were picked up dead by friend or foe. No line for her, the woman who loved him once,—loved him as she had known him. Upon the inner case of his watch was his own name and address; and still no line for her, the woman who held him so dear. But in the locket dangling from the chain there were two lines cut into the virgin gold:

"FRANCES, MY WIFE.

"Richmond, April 13th, 1861."

How roseate then grew life for the girl. He remembered! He had kept her words with him night and day. He loved her; he had told no falsehood for the value of her father's wealth. As she stood by the wounded soldier,—his eyes resting in sympathy on her, her own seeing nothing but the face in that half-lit room where her shrine was raised, all that was left of resentment vanished out of her heart. When afterwards she realized this she was amazed and troubled.

On e Federal soldier at least in all the hosts that fell into Confederate hands had no cause to complain of his nursing. A hospital stretcher

bore him to the home of Frances Brookin and into her room. It was her whim, and the step-mother was indulging her whims in those days. There Frances and mammy, with William as a helper and Brodnar as an occasional adviser, lavished on him such care and attention as he had never dreamed was possible, for he was one of those homeless waifs to whom war had promised nothing but excitement and change. It was all a mystery to him, but he questioned not. He accepted the girl's simple statement as to Somers, and was content to let the sun of his prosperity shine on.

One day when the soldier was able to limp about the garden upon his crutches and sit in the shade by the plashing fountain to read in the *Despatch* of the great battles being fought around the endangered capital of the Confederacy, Frances, bearing the highest testimonials from surgeons and hospital officials as to the conspicuous and devoted service she had rendered, went to the Executive Mansion, and secured admission to the presence of its great chief. Mr. Davis courteously read her papers, and, looking into the earnest face of the fair girl sitting beside him, gave graceful expression to his appreciation of her patriotism.

"Ask what you will, my child," he said, "and if I may consistently grant it, your wishes shall be gratified."

"It is the parole of a private soldier," she said, "and a safe-conduct through our lines. He is wounded, but has recovered sufficiently to travel. He will not enter the service again, sir; his injuries incapacitate him."

"And is that all?"

"All!"

"May I ask, why this extraordinary interest in a private soldier?" The President was smiling, his sad, kind face questioning her closer than his lips alone. She described the scene of her friend's heroism, the quick interest of her hearer revealing the kindly heart within him.

"Grand!" he said briefly. "I should be glad to see him,—but no,"—and he turned slightly towards the mass of papers,—"the crowd waits."

"The man that this soldier saved," she said simply, "was a—kinsman of mine,—one to whom I am greatly indebted."

"And is that all?"

"That is all," she answered. But under the playful, mocking gaze of the President, she felt her face grow crimson. He smiled and bowed gravely from his chair when he noticed the tell-tale blush.

"That is all!" he said. One line upon a sheet of official paper and the touch of a hand-bell, and Frances found herself under the guidance of a messenger on her way to the War Department. At the door of the

department she met Raymond Holbin in a new and glittering uniform. He was coming out, but, seeing her, stopped in surprise.

"You here!" he exclaimed.

"Why not?" She gave him but a glance, a sarcastic smile playing about her lips.

"It is no place for women; you should be at home."

"It is no place for men; you should not be at home, Captain Holbin." An angry reply arose to his lips, but he checked it.

"You know why I am not," he said; "I have been unfairly treated; but say the word, and I will go even as a private soldier,—if you will promise——"

"It is immaterial to me whether you go or stay," she said, and passed in. Holbin waited a moment and followed her, keeping out of her sight.

"What was it the young woman wanted?" he asked of a clerk acquaintance with careless indifference when she was gone.

"An order for the parole of a prisoner and a pass through the lines." As Raymond walked away in deep thought, a messenger pointed him out to a hotel porter and the latter handed him a sealed envelope. Within this was a card bearing the name "Louise."

XII.

WHEN Virginia seceded and her young men rushed to the front, among the first to seek a commission was Raymond Holbin. This was in the days when most people believed that the military feature of secession would prove little more than a grand spectacular demonstration. Graduates of West Point were at once in great demand, and backed by the Brooklyn influence Holbin was appointed a captain of infantry among the State troops, no search of his record being at that time possible; but when the State transferred her troops to the Confederate government and Holbin sought a colonelcy, advancing in support of his application the fact that he had been an officer in the regular army, the matchless memory of the Southern President recalled his history. Jefferson Davis had been Secretary of War at the time the Holbin court-martial was held, and the record coming before him for review, he had promptly approved the sentence of the court. A long struggle to secure a modification of the sentence had followed,—and in this struggle many politicians had been arrayed by Holbin's mother, but in vain. The sentence stood; and these people never forgot the issues involved: the Holbins hated Jefferson Davis. The name 'Holbin' had clung to the memory of the hero of Buena Vista; he declined to appoint Raymond Holbin or to commission him in any way to command honorable men. The decision was in harmony with his

devotion to his principles, a devotion that was destined to make him in the end the most unfortunate of American statesmen.

This new public reflection upon Holbin filled him with an ungovernable rage. Had safe opportunity offered, he would not have hesitated to send a bullet through the heart of the man who was responsible for it. Indeed, he armed himself, and for many months was convinced that he might at any moment be dedicated to the discharge of a patriotic duty. The President of the Confederacy walked daily in the presence of death, for fanaticism and desperate men surrounded him. His safety lay in the fact that he walked in the sunlight, where the results of an attack promised never less than life for life. And Raymond Holbin was not the man to barter his away: he bided his time. A far more dangerous enemy was his mother, who numbered official acquaintances in Washington by the scores, and who knew when and where to plant the deadliest blow. This woman, secure in her social position, displaying by her own efforts and the efforts of her step-daughter in hospital work devotion to the Southern cause, was in secret fast balancing accounts with Jefferson Davis.

Friends of Raymond Holbin, for he still had a few, with the aid of his mother, secured him a bomb-proof position with a rank of captain; and there he stuck, with all the time for plotting that might be demanded.

What seemed to Holbin an opportunity for a sweeping revenge came very unexpectedly. Up to then he had been but an instrument in the hands of his mother and that large circle of invisibles unknown to him who sapped the strength of the Confederacy. Their many interests preceded his. The opportunity came through Louise. He did not dare to disregard her card and responded instantly to her implied command, armed with his old secret and a virtuous indignation. He had almost forgotten her. A year before, when she had sufficiently recovered from her illness to permit it, he had sent her North, deceived by "sacred" pledges, to a new hiding-place. The immediate opening of hostilities had seemed to fix the separation. It had never occurred to him that she would make an effort to cross the lines.

The new meeting between Louise and Holbin was marked by a great display of passion on his part; she was calm and collected, a suggestion of recklessness, however, in her eyes and every movement; her face relentless and white with despair of an abandoned life. For the first time Holbin failed to move her to anger or to tears.

"I came," said she, when his rage had spent itself and in answer to his despairing offer of money if she would depart, "not because I need your assistance,—that is, your money, for I do not; I am now well supplied." She could not have touched him in a more delicate spot. A swift jealousy, a curious indignation, filled him.

"Whose money?" he asked breathlessly.

"He is very rich, and gives with a liberal hand when the woman is smart, is able, is fearless, and willing to risk her life at his bidding." It was not the speech, but the cautious glance which involuntarily she gave to her surroundings that awoke a suspicion in his breast.

"Louise, you are a——"

"Hush! I am a mother robbed of her child; that is explanation enough; for such a woman is capable of anything, even murder, as you know. Raymond, where is my daughter?" He looked at her uneasily, and the white feather appeared instantly in spite of his efforts to conceal it.

"She is well, and well cared for."

"I asked you where, and you have not answered me!"

"There is much to be agreed upon between us before I tell you that," he said after a pause, during which he narrowly watched her. He took a seat close beside her and continued in his old confidential, half-appealing way: "Louise, I am a ruined, a disgraced man, and ripe for anything that will take me out of this city." He paused, but she did not answer or seem to hear him, and he added: "My downfall began when I was untrue to myself,—to you. I have never had a moment's good-luck since; everything has gone wrong with me." Still she did not answer him, but her bosom heaved once or twice, and a strange look came into the white face she turned towards him. "I have now no chance on earth except a chance to play for even and quit the country. Louise, if I succeed will you go back with me into the old sweet life? I will be true to you; I will right all of your wrongs—and I will be a father indeed to your child. Let us go, Louise, out of this wild, heartless country back across the ocean to the little English home, back to our flowers, back to the old life." He took her hand, and this time she did not withdraw it.

"My child," she said almost inaudibly, her face lowered and her bosom rising and falling rapidly.

"That will be all right,—all right. I swear to you she is well and has not forgotten you. She never fails to ask for you, and at night to say her little prayer." A cry burst from the wretched woman.

"My baby! My baby!" She sank her face in her hands, then sprang to her feet. "You deceived me," she said frantically, beginning to walk the floor, "I cannot,—I cannot believe you."

"I have no cause to deceive you, Louise,—none." He spoke very tenderly; "and I would not if I could—now. This uniform, these shoulder-straps, mean nothing in my case but disgrace. I am a stay-at-home. The dullards of my class at West Point are brigadier-generals in the field; I am a uniformed clerk."

"The woman——?" Louise could not conclude her question.

"She will not assent," he said savagely; and then quickly, lest a natural inference should array her against him again, "I have purposely made myself so obnoxious to her that she would rather be a pauper than share a fortune with me. She has yet time to decide, for she is not twenty-one; but I know her decision in advance."

"And then?"

"Then life with you, Louise, our child's happiness provided for. I do not count upon that fortune; the slaves will be free and all values upset; land will not be worth much in this State." Louise came close to him and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"If I could only trust you," she said sadly, "all might yet be well, for I have a way——"

"What do you mean?" She hesitated and, leaning over, whispered a sentence in his ear. He lifted his face quickly.

"How much?"

"Our own price."

"Our own price!"

"And revenge, Raymond, revenge for you."

"Revenge?—yes—well said. No price could be complete without that. And what a revenge! The assassin stabs his foe and is infamous; the man who slays his country's foe is a hero. Louise, you have made me happy, and you little know how chance has favored you. I am connected with the War Department—I have friends around me; and, better, I have my facts in hand."

"You were planning then, too."

"I did not know what might arise, and I was determined to be ready; I was tired of doing the work while others reaped the benefit. But now comes the greatest difficulty,—and that reminds me: How did you get here through the lines?"

"You remember the little farm in which I had only a life interest, the only thing we could not sell? I was warned that it would soon be within Southern lines and was sent there to wait. Jackson's army passed over it, and I came on to Richmond and delivered my messages." Holbin was astounded.

"Who do you know here?"

She shook her head. "Not a human being besides yourself. I placed my papers in a certain receptacle to which I had been directed. If there is an answer I shall find it in the same place at an appointed time." Holbin walked the floor in great excitement.

"I know both the place and the time," he said; "I took your messages; but there never would have been any answer except for this meeting. I alone can supply the information which is desired, and I shall not let it go through the usual channel. It is the chance of my life. I have facts that no other human being could have accumulated,

facts of vital importance. My God, Louise! A million dollars is a small price."

"Give them to me," she said; "I will deliver them upon one condition."

"One condition? Name it."

"The price shall be paid to me." Holbin stood in deep thought.

"No," he said, as though dismissing some mental argument, "it is too dangerous a mission for any woman. Capture would mean for you certain death."

"My child!" she said simply; and then, "I shall find a way to get through."

"Then make the trip safely, and I swear to you I will surrender your child and come to you, too."

"Oh, Raymond, promises, promises! It would be inhuman to deceive me now."

"You will control the future if you deliver my information and collect the price." She knew him well enough to understand that this logic with him was conclusive.

"Then I go," she said, "but how?"

"I shall prepare a way," said Holbin.

But when he was gone Louise, free from the influence of his personality, began to feel all her suspicion and distrust returning. She reviewed calmly but bitterly his life with her: it had been a succession of deceptions and utterly selfish. She asked herself over and over what recourse would she have if he should slip away and leave her in Richmond, and gradually, as she considered his manner, she became convinced that he intended nothing more or less so far as she was concerned. The spirit which had sustained her during the last year returned, and she felt herself full of fight. Experience had given her better control of her nerves; her life, when away from Holbin, carried a more masculine note: most women who go to school in Washington acquire it. She had come to Richmond with the full intention of seeing Mrs. Brookin, forcing a settlement of her claims upon Raymond, and securing her child. Of success as to the latter she felt assured: the other was doubtful. In the hour after her last interview with Raymond, it came to her as an inspiration that she now had a weapon in her hand that would beat down any guard, pierce any armor; for he had admitted his connection with the enemy and had a gigantic enterprise afoot. She had but to insist upon a settlement in advance and to threaten, but the pressure upon Raymond should come from his mother. She therefore determined to carry out her original intention, call on that lady, and have a plain talk. Her surprise was complete when at the moment that decision was reached the card of Mrs. Brookin was brought to her room, —complete, because not only was the visit of this lady a most astonish-

ing thing, but upon that card was a sign for which she was instructed to look in every instance,—*two periods* following the name. The meaning of the two periods was that the visitor had a message to be sent by word of mouth only and that she might be trusted.

By what means the visitor knew of her Louise was not informed; but she had been given a name and directed to register under it, and she readily guessed. She at once said, after the formal greetings were over:

"I perceive, madam, that your mourning has reached the second period." The visitor moved her chair close and made a statement, carefully worded, of considerable length, and this Louise was required to repeat over and over until its main points were fixed in mind. It related to a Cabinet meeting of the day before. Mrs. Brookin then offered a few comments upon the weather and the unfortunate war and would have arisen, but Louise detained her. She said, bending over her:

"You have a son in the War Department who is in great danger, and his indiscretion has endangered you and our whole system——"

"Lower!—speak lower, for God's sake!"

"He has grossly deceived and wronged a woman named Louise, and has been rash enough to let her into his and your secrets."

Mrs. Brookin was almost unable to articulate; the other handed her a glass of water.

"Where is she,—this Louise?" she asked then.

"Madam, she stands before you." Louise had then and there a part of her revenge: the elder woman, in spite of all her experience, gave way to a sudden panic. But only a few moments was she absolutely helpless. Habit and the calm face before her restored her presence of mind.

"What is it we can do for this woman who has been so badly treated? She has no cause to doubt me. Tell me how I may serve her." Her voice was calm and insinuatingly conciliatory.

"She demands a public marriage, madam. Until this year she has believed herself less than the legal wife of Raymond Holbin, though God knows she never intended to be less than that. She was his wife abroad, openly acknowledged as such, and now she has proof of that fact—absolute, undoubted proof of the highest character,—affidavits of acquaintances, registers, letters addressed to her in his own handwriting, and photographs. All this mass of evidence is properly certified to in duplicate, and she has one copy of each safe in the hands of her lawyers in Washington and one copy here. Madam, your son has lived with this woman as his acknowledged wife, and I am assured that under Virginia law she is his wife and would inherit his estate."

"Ah! She wishes money?"

"No. She wishes to have her child restored."

"Her child? Raymond's child?"

"Alas, madam, one word answers you,—yes!"

"He has not told me this," said the mother. "It is all that he had left to tell: his life has been a great, a painful disappointment to me."

"It is likely that he has not told you other things. He is preparing for transmission information which he thinks is good for a vast sum of money; and there is the trouble, for I believe, as you sit before me, madam, that, having given me his sacred promise, his sworn promise to send it by Louise, join her later, and right all her wrongs, he is really planning to desert her again. And in that event, madam, he would leave a desperate woman behind."

"What could such a woman do then? Who would believe her,—a self-confessed spy?"

"That thought has already impressed me deeply. I am satisfied now that the woman's safest plan is to see that he doesn't leave until he has met her demands. And, madam, you have the power to control him. At six o'clock, unless I see you both earlier, I shall address an anonymous communication——"

"Will you take tea with us at six, instead,—in my own apartments? I think that better."

"At six then. I like the idea!"

In the privacy of her own room Mrs. Brookin gave unrestrained expression to a rage that was consuming her. No one who knew the cool, suave, tactful woman of affairs would have recognized her at that moment. She paced the luxurious apartment with the fury and abandon of a tigress entrapped, her crushed parasol and the emblems of her mourning beneath her feet. Responsive to her furious ringing, William came running to the room at intervals of five minutes to answer over and over:

"No, ma'am, Mr. Raymond ain't come in yet," and returned to tell below stairs that "Mistis is done gone plum mad over some p'n!" Raymond came at last. As he entered his mother's room such a storm burst upon him as he had not dreamed could emanate from the heart of a woman. She had been humiliated, outwitted, and belittled by an adventuress, she declared: she had been threatened and would be forced into a compromise with a creature of the gutters, and if they carried out their contract, what a triumph for Brodnar and the jealous, envious people who had resented their entrance into Richmond society! At the moment she hated even her son; she blamed him for his insane disregard of her wishes; he had been a marplot, she declared, balking her efforts to advance his fortunes, winning disgrace where she had opened the path to honor; and now nothing was left for him but marriage with a low woman, and the loss of all for which she had striven.

"Take her," cried the despairing woman, "and out of my sight forever. Go down to her level,—starve, and leave your miserable offspring to wretchedness." She gave way at length under the strain, and Raymond for the first time in his life beheld his mother abandon herself to tears. He stood moodily looking from the window until she grew quieter. When he turned she was carefully righting the room, her face was pale, but her old expression of resolve had returned, and a dangerous light shone in her eyes.

"You spoke of marriage," he said. "Do you think Louise will insist upon that? Will she not be satisfied with the child?"

"She will dictate the terms, not you. She is desperate enough for anything; and I know what a desperate woman will do to save herself." Raymond turned quickly and looked at his mother. She did not avoid his questioning gaze. "She will denounce us both to the government if you do not marry her and give her back the child. I should if I were in her place. And she will make public announcement of her claim to a common-law marriage with you."

He waited in silence a minute, as though to weigh her words.

"Whether or not Louise substantiates her claim, proof of your immoral life would kill the will of my husband, for public policy would not compel Frances to marry you to inherit her property. It will not compel a young girl to condone immoral conduct for which it would grant a married woman divorce."

"Then we are ruined!" said Raymond. "I shall look out for myself. Promise her anything to-night." The selfishness of the decision would have been appalling to anyone but his mother. She looked at him a moment, a sarcastic smile hovering about her lips.

"And I shall look out for myself." She began this self-preservation instantly, and with a falsehood so ingenious that its use at that moment would alone have proven her ability as a diplomat. "But hard as it is upon me, great as is my disappointment, for you the blow is heavier: I should not, except under these circumstances, tell you, as I do tell you now, that Frances and I have reached an agreement: she has consented to carry out her father's wishes; she stipulated only that you were not to be informed of this agreement until she chose to tell you; she will not place herself in a position to be harassed or worried by a lover now: her whole thought is on the wounded soldiers." She saw the sudden rush of blood to her son's face, and then the pallor return. A groan burst from him, and he turned away; and therein was apparent the vast difference in the natures of mother and son: helplessness, weakness, and surrender was possible with the man; but with the woman, though storms of adversity might overwhelm her and clouds darken her path, nothing could long daunt her fierce, relentless spirit. For her there was no such thing as complete despair. Her time had

come in this battle which she was fighting against odds: she approached her despairing ally and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"Raymond," she said, "what would you sacrifice to clear the way for marriage with Frances?"

He saw the calm, confident look in her face, and a breath of hope stirred his fainting manhood.

"Anything—everything!" he said at length.

"If you will yield implicit obedience to me,—if you will be guided, —I shall clear the way for you. Will you?"

"Yes."

"Human life or lives must not be regarded. We have no friends: we are surrounded by enemies; we must put aside conscience and sentiment to win; we must hesitate nowhere. Do you understand? And do you consent?"

"I shall leave it all to you, mother. What is first to be done?"

"Meet Louise here at six o'clock, and take your cue from me. She must be disarmed of suspicion."

From the moment of his surrender Raymond Holbin was ripe for anything his mother might suggest. It was her mind that conceived the plan to convince Louise that she would be permitted to ride through the Confederate picket line; that, under an arrangement secured by Raymond through friends in the War Department, only a pretense of firing upon her would be made. It was a plan that would have deceived no one other than a woman.

That six o'clock tea was the triumph of a brilliant diplomatist's career. Louise was forgiven, caressed, received back as a member of the family, her claims and wrongs acknowledged, and full reparation agreed upon. No one could have excelled Mrs. Brookin in the tenderness with which she treated the now happy woman. She blamed Raymond openly for having concealed the truth from her.

"I knew nothing of the unfair advantage he took of you,—nor of the child," she said to Louise. "My husband's niece! It was indeed a crime! And yet I see now that I largely have been to blame. I threatened him; my heart was set upon another plan. My dear child, if loving care and sympathy can compensate in part for what you have suffered, they shall be yours. But although the circumstances seem to demand that marriage should at once be solemnized, the ceremony must not be performed in Richmond. In all likelihood this city will be your home, and you should come here as Raymond's wife. Fortunately, he has given no one here reason to suppose he is single, and it will be very easy at the right time to have you and the little girl arrive. I assure you, my daughter, that your reception will leave no room for doubt as to your future position." As Louise sat looking into

the benevolent face of the older woman, with tearful eyes, her heart overflowed with gratitude.

"My child, madam," she faltered. "Where is she?"

"Near this city, but just now beyond the lines. You will be directed how to reach her when you get through: or better, Raymond will join you, and together you will find her."

Louise went back to the hotel almost content.

XIII.

RAYMOND HOLBIN had found it difficult to advance his cause with Frances, if for no other reason than that few opportunities for seeing her alone presented themselves. He had sought interviews repeatedly and offered the many little courtesies which the male resident of a house may extend to those of the other sex, but they had been declined with a persistence that only added fuel to the flames which were consuming him. The girl seldom dined with the family; she had during her father's long illness instituted a little house-keeping plan of her own and took her meals in her apartments, a matter very conveniently arranged by reason of the position of the apartments and the constant attendance of mammy. Occasionally, yielding to the insistence of her step-mother, she joined the family upstairs, but on such occasions she carefully avoided a *tête à tête* with Raymond, withdrawing always with the elder woman. On such occasions, the inevitable topic had been the war, its vicissitudes, and the responsibilities it involved. In these meetings and the presence of great events she after a while learned, if not to like her step-mother, at least to suspend judgment upon her; indeed, sometimes she had been tempted to doubt the correctness of her former judgment, for when the city began to be crowded with wounded Mrs. Brookin threw open her house to them and gave much of her time to their care. The gentleness with which the elder woman entered into this work, her generosity, and her universal courtesy were bound to impress such a girl as Frances. Once, as though yielding to a noble impulse, she placed her arm about the girl and said:

"My child, you have surprised and gratified me of late. If I had known you years ago we should never have been less than friends. Try to forget the days when I seemed unkind, please, and do not cherish anger towards an old woman." Frances tried to forget, but always in the presence of Mrs. Brookin she felt a constraint. She seemed ever to have entered an atmosphere that had been stripped of its electricity. Try as she might, it had been impossible to respond unreservedly to her advances; the best she could do was to meet them with courtesy.

The presence of wounded men in the house gave Raymond for a short time an opportunity to see something of Frances, and he too

became a famous nurse. But one day Frances assured him that if he should prove as good a fighter as he was a nurse, promotion would follow; then he came less often. Twice before she had been unable to resist temptation to touch the raw place: once she had asked him directly how it was that a man could keep out of a war in which other men were winning fame; and once, in reply to his question, "Will you ever like me, Frances?" she said, "A Virginia woman should not be expected to like civilians overmuch when Virginia soil is invaded." At length, to avoid him, she gave more of her time to the hospital, yielding the care of those in the home to her step-mother and the trained nurses. Mrs. Brookin won golden opinions in those days. A week seldom passed without the appearance of her name in print coupled with lavish commendation.

Doctor Brodnar, busy every hour of the twenty-four in which his giant strength could sustain him awake, had little time to spare for Frances; but one day in the hospital he got a brief report of the girl's new experience.

"If I had not discovered that I am better at sawing off legs than fighting scheming women, my child, I should say that you have never been in so much danger as now; but I have retired as an adviser of young women. By the way, have you decided that you will come out and keep us company at home? My wife sends an invitation not less than once a week."

"No," she said, "it would seem like running. But tell Mrs. Brodnar I am very grateful for her kindness."

"All right. Come when you please; and, Frances, call me a fool as often as you wish, but be careful what you eat in your step-mother's house—and take no medicine there! How have you satisfied them about the night when a friend of ours got his wound?"

"They have never been satisfied, I think. They tell me I am full of whims, and perhaps they class that night among them. You have not heard——?"

"Not a word. Good-by!" Doctor Brodnar in the brief meetings with Frances would never discuss Somers. It is likely that his friend's choice of sides had been an immense disappointment. Frances was bound to receive Brodnar's hint unfavorably when she considered the new and continued kindness of her step-mother. Often the latter said:

"When it is all over, my child, this cruel war, these scenes of suffering, we will take our trunks and go abroad somewhere for a year of rest." The idea seemed to be a favorite one with her; she told all of her acquaintances that she and "poor dear Frances" were going abroad as soon as hostilities closed: that the child was simply worked down. And in the face of this tender solicitude and the old lady's devotion to Confederate sufferers, people shook their heads and acknowledged that

one should not always believe the unkind things whispered of a neighbor. From the isolation of a suspected person, in a year Mrs. Brookin achieved immense popularity and won the confidence of even the highest officials, in whose home circles she was as welcome as they were in hers. How welcome they were might be estimated from certain government records, if the records were accessible and possible of translation now.

Holbin had heard of Frances's latest whim, the Union soldier. He had not interested himself in the latter's welfare, but he made his appearance in the wing-room on the day after Louise had been pacified, and finding only mammy there with the wounded man, he entered and engaged him in cheerful conversation. He gave him the latest news from the front, and supplied him with cigars. Responding to these attentions, the soldier readily told his story. When the name of Richard Somers, his former enemy, was reached, Holbin was visibly excited. Still, not for one instant did it occur to him to connect the presence of the wounded man in that room with the fact that Somers was his captain; and the soldier himself naturally took it for granted that the cause of his presence was well understood by all.

Frances found Holbin there, and stood silently resentful upon the threshold until he had explained his visit.

"I am told by the clerk in the department," he said, "that you had secured a pass for your *protégé*, and I was repentant that you had been forced to go there in person. I have called now to offer my assistance. There is something else to be done for a wounded man besides getting him a pass: he must have transportation and assistance generally."

"I have been thinking of that," she admitted, troubled.

"If I may be allowed to do a wounded enemy a service," said Holbin, "I shall take him in my buggy to our outposts."

"I am sure that he will be greatly obliged." The soldier expressed himself grateful, and Holbin went away, making light of the service and without further effort to trespass upon the girl's rare mood. On the inner stair he paused in deep thought, his dark face savagely triumphant. His mother met him in the hall above and read excitement in his every movement.

"What is it, Raymond?" He hesitated and smiled wickedly.

"I am afraid even you would be shocked, mother mine. But trust me, when I do tell you about it, you will not be ashamed of your cub."

"Raymond, how dare you?" The woman's face grew crimson, and then white as from a sudden terror. He showed his teeth and disappeared before she could stop him. Angry and uneasy, she sought her own room.

The wounded soldier rode next day with Raymond Holbin, his pale

face reflecting the light of liberty's sun not yet risen for him, his blue uniform dusted and cleaned until every button was as of gold.

"Good-by, miss," he said; "I'll deliver your message, an' I know the Cap'n 'll be a proud man to see me back!" He offered mammy his last greenback, but it was indignantly refused, witnesses being present.

"Dat green money ain't no good down here no how."

"It will be," said the soldier simply.

Holbin returned next day and gave a vivid account of his parting with the happy prisoner; and then he immediately sought his own room; but not before Frances, a little ashamed of herself, had thanked him warmly for his kindness to her soldier.

Upon the same day the Confederate relief picket found a Federal soldier lying dead within their lines. He had been shot from behind with a pistol held so close to his coat that it was burned by the powder. The affair afforded but a few minutes' discussion, for the explosion of fire-arms was almost incessant at times, and dead men in June, 1862, were plentiful around Richmond. The only part of the mystery worth considering from the military stand-point was how the man got through the lines at that particular place. A watch taken from his body contained the names of Captain Richard Somers and the regiment to which he was attached, and also the likeness of an elderly woman. It was surmised that the victim of the pistol-shot was a deserter and robber; that he had been captured and killed while attempting violence or an escape. The officer into whose possession the watch drifted was in charge of a burial-party next day under a flag of truce, and, learning that Captain Somers was among the troops opposite, sent the watch to him with a courteous explanation. The gratification of Captain Somers was only equalled by his bewilderment. Many weeks before he had entrusted the jewel to his faithful artilleryman, and this soldier, he had been assured, was left dead upon the bloody battle-field. His conclusion was that someone had robbed the body at that time and had been overtaken by fate while engaged in some other nefarious enterprise. But when Captain Somers casually opened the locket and found therein a long, slender curl of reddish-golden hair and on the narrow ribbon with which it was tied the name "Frances," he was involved in a hopeless mystery. He was within sound of the Richmond church-bells that morning, and between the intervals of fighting and moving to new positions he had already in imagination entered that city. The name thus sent was the only tidings of Frances he had ever received, and it made him a sadly happy man.

XIV.

LOCKED within his own room, Raymond Holbin drew from his pocket the packet of papers taken by him from the murdered man with the official order for which he had committed the crime. The order read: "Pass the bearer, Thomas Riley, paroled prisoner, through the lines." "It will not do Louise much good anyway," he said, "even were I disposed to give it to her." The name "Martha Somers" upon the sealed packet attracted his attention, and he recognized in a Delaware address beneath the home of Richard Somers. He remembered then the dead soldier's description of the battle in which he was wounded, and guessed that the packet contained the papers given to him to deliver. Holbin would hardly have troubled himself to wade through a score of farewell pages from a soldier to his mother, and would have promptly destroyed the whole collection but that the remaining envelope, addressed to Richard Somers, lay before him, and upon it his eye caught the Brookin crest.

"This is very different," he said to himself with interest. "Let us see what Frances has to say to the fellow." He broke the seal and read:

"I send you back, well and free, the man who saved your life; I found him grievously wounded,—a prisoner. It is all that I have been able to do in return for your kindness to me, a stranger, and for the wound you received in my house. Think me not indelicate when I say that the sweetest memory my heart carries is the memory of your face beneath the match that night and of the words 'Frances, my wife,' which you have engraved in your locket, and over which I have placed a message to you. Forgive me; it can never matter much, for a sea of blood rolls between us. Good-night. God be with you till we meet,—in Heaven.

"FRANCES."

Holbin sat gazing blankly upon the lines. His head was in a whirl.

"Her husband! her husband! Pshaw!" he exclaimed with an uneasy laugh, springing to his feet and beginning to walk the floor, "this comes of the damnable work out yonder to-day; my nerves are simply unstrung." He took a bottle from his dresser, poured out a stiff drink, and tossed it off with one gulp. Then he went back to his table and, picking up the letter, read aloud: "wound received in my house;"—"your face beneath the lighted match." As he stood thus the letter slipped from his hand. "Louise!" he whispered, "the man whom Louise shot!" Not in all the vicissitudes of his wild career had Holbin received such a shock of surprise. His mind, dazed and bewildered, could not arrange a deduction beyond the discovery that Richard Somers was the man around whom so much of mystery had gathered, and that Frances referred to him in the tender word "hus-

band." He laid his hand upon the bell-cord and hesitated; then his wicked smile came back again as he pulled it.

"Tell your mistress I shall be glad if she will favor me with her presence here," he said to William. When, a few minutes later, Mrs. Brookin came into the room he failed to hear her.

"What is it, Raymond?" she asked. He roused himself and spoke rapidly.

"Frances got her wounded soldier a pass through our lines, and to please her I carried him to the front. After he left me I found these papers in the buggy where he had dropped them. The fellow's captain is Richard Somers."

"Richard Somers!"

"And now, madam, read the note from Frances to him and let me congratulate you upon——"

She read it rapidly, and when her amazed face was lifted he added,—

"Your son-in-law."

"I do not understand! What does it mean?"

"Answer that question for me, mother; my head has ceased to be of any assistance. Undoubtedly, however, the woman who you lead me to believe gave you her promise to marry me some day is already in point of law Richard Somers's wife and has forfeited her right to any part in her father's estate. Madam, fortune favors the bold; I congratulate you!" His manner betrayed an intense excitement and bitterness.

"Wait, wait!" said the woman quietly, her eyes riveted upon the letter. "It seems that he was her husband that night. Was not that night prior to the signing of the will?"

"Yes, the night before." The son, looking upon his mother's face, could find no evidence of satisfaction there. It was ghastly. "Why, what is it now?"

"A stronger will and a clearer head than we imagined has been at war with us. I do not know the law, but they were trying to defeat the will in advance. It does defeat it in some way, or our enemies would not have taken the risk. If Frances were really married before the will was signed, she cannot comply with its requirements, and the law will not demand an impossibility."

"Well!" He bent forward, his voice reduced to a whisper.

"We have lost, you and I. Except for my pittance, we shall be beggars upon the day that Frances comes of age; and that day is near at hand."

A long silence followed, and then the eyes of mother and son met.

"Do you not share alike if the will fails?"

"No. The intention of my husband will be operative; only the

condition fails. There is no hope that way." His mother looked from him and spoke slowly.

"Is there no remedy?" he asked.

"Yes. If Richard Somers is not living when Frances comes of age, or should Frances——"

"Mother, mother, take care!" The words burst in sudden energy from the wretched man. "Lift a hand to harm but one hair of her head, and, by the Mother of God——!"

"Hush! Hush!" she said quietly. "You love her; that is enough. She is safe."

"Swear it."

"Read the other letter," she said, disregarding him. "It is likely that a man would mention his wife in his last letter to his mother." Raymond stripped off the envelope and shook two letters to the table. One, unsealed, was addressed to Mrs. Martha Somers.

"Nothing but gush," he said, running his eye hurriedly over the lines. Mrs. Brookin had picked up the other, which was addressed to Dr. Brodnar.

"We are getting to the heart of the mystery," she said. "Read this one." Raymond read in silence first, and then, leaning forward, excitedly read aloud:

"Go to the girl I married at your request and say death has dissolved the bond. Break the news to her as gently as possible, for I have been vain enough to believe that the child loves me. You prepared the way by your partiality, and her loneliness and excess of gratitude accomplished the rest. Let me confess that I have been foolish enough to love her and to dream that some day you would permit me to return and openly seek her out. But this cursed war has killed my dream, Brodnar, and if this letter reaches you, it will be after it has killed your friend also! Go to her and say that since he met her Richard Somers has loved her as a man loves but once."

There were other lines dealing with the friendship between the two men while in Paris and containing a tender farewell.

"It is now plain to me," he said. "The meddlesome scoundrel Brodnar is the author of the whole plot!" Mrs. Brookin folded the letters into their places. Her hands were without a tremor.

"Let them keep their secret. To inform them is to arm them. We will continue to be,—their dupes. Richard Somers may not be living when Frances reaches twenty-one; who can tell? The man who lost these letters has, I suppose, ere this made a full report."

"The man who lost the letters, mother, has reported elsewhere with a bullet through his heart."

"Raymond!"

"What does it matter? We are killing them in front of our lines every day. One behind counts for little. He had a pass; I needed it.

I need it now more than ever." The woman's face glowed with a sudden light.

"You are too rash, my boy; take no steps before consulting me. In the mean time these papers have no value for us. Burn them, burn them now! But no! give me the letter to Brodnar: it may be valuable some day as evidence that Richard Somers is dead." One by one Holbin held the others over lighted matches and saw them vanish into cinders. His mother placed her hand upon his shoulder.

"Raymond, you are again planning to cross the lines——"

"I know what I am doing! Do not seek to influence me."

"What do you mean?"

"There is no time for explanation, nor is there any need, for you already understand. It is sufficient to say that I am going across the lines for more than one purpose now."

"There are all sorts of people in an army," she said; "I have seen it stated that many officers killed in battle are shot from behind."

"That is one," he replied, "and men who serve their country in time of war are forgiven many things. I am in possession of that which will secure for me a review of my case and restore to me my commission. I have offered my sword to the Confederacy once; the next time I will offer it point first!"

"You have valuable information for sale. Is that what you mean? Go slow upon that line; if you draw your sword against Virginia openly you sacrifice all interests here. Better be a friend to both sides, and when you come back with proofs that Richard Somers is really dead all may yet be well. If she is free at twenty-one the will is binding, even if it were held that she has not already sacrificed her interest.

"Come what may," he said passionately, "while I live Brodnar shall never see Frances Brookin the wife in truth of Richard Somers."

"Nor while I live," said his mother; "there is my hand upon it."

"Keep out of it, mother, keep out, or you will regret it!" said the wretched man.

"Ungrateful boy! Where is your promise? Do you repudiate that? Have you forgotten your danger?"

"No, but she shall not suffer at your hands. Leave her to me. And, mother, if you ever find us dead together in that room downstairs, have no thought of me. The man who has neither love nor revenge has nothing to live for." He seized his hat and rushed from her presence.

XV.

COLONEL RICHARD SOMERS dismounted and took refuge upon the veranda of a little cottage that fronted a cross-road near Mechanicsville while his artillery thundered by and unlimbered in position to face the enemy. Men, horses, and officers were worn out with fatigue

and hard fighting and eager for an opportunity to snatch a few hours of rest. The two great armies had entered upon the memorable seven days' fight which was to swing around Richmond and leave a bloody path to Malvern Hill. The cottage seemed deserted, but presently an aged negress made her appearance from somewhere and pathetically attempted to extend its hospitalities to the officers who began to swarm into the yard. Clinging to her skirts was a little girl of six or seven years, whose fair complexion, blue eyes, and silken curls bespoke a patrician parentage, but whose frail figure and incessant cough gave evidence of a fatal weakness.

"Her ma is done dead, sah," said the old woman respectfully when Colonel Somers hurriedly questioned her concerning the family, "an' her pa left 'fo' you-all come; done come yistiddy an' go right back to town. He don't stay hyar anyhow."

"But that child must not remain here; she is in danger every moment. You must move out!"

"Whey we goin' move, sah? Don't know nobody any better off'n we are roun' hyah. Marster tell me to stay right hyah, an' I goin' ter stay hyah. Better tek yo' folks an' move on, sah, whey you started." Somers had other things to think about, and turned away. Very likely the movement next day would carry them beyond the cottage, and the danger was not pressing at the moment. In the morning the child might be sent to the rear if necessary, and to-night he rather welcomed the adjuncts of refined life. He had use for the old woman, for he was but recently out of hospital and somewhat spoiled by nursing. He made himself and officers comfortable in the best rooms after the manner of old campaigners and prepared for the short rest which he so much needed.

Somers had made the necessary dispositions and, left alone upon the porch for a moment, his thoughts reverted to the cherished memento in his locket, the worldless message of love which had so mysteriously reached him. It was just one slender curl—the curl that had touched his cheek, he was sure—and with it a name. They were enough; no words could have summoned up more vividly the scenes of that darkened wing-room, nor have told him more eloquently that within the excited city there was one heart which held no hatred for him. It was no hour for dreaming, and he roused himself to the present. Around him were contending hosts of doomed men, the spirit of war hovered over the rude camps, and Death lurked in the shadows, eager for his harvest. From the distance, the echoes of dropping shots came faintly to the ear, and presently what seemed to be a small volley. This volley claimed his attention and that of the junior officers, and he had ordered a sergeant up to inquire as to the cause, when the sound of rapid hoof-beats approached upon the road, and in the dim light as he waited a

frightened horse, pursued by half a dozen troopers, sped by. Presently the men returned, leading the captured animal and carrying its late rider. The latter was youthful and clad in Confederate gray, which was drenched with blood and covered with dust; for the wounded rider, clinging desperately to the mane of the horse as he lay extended upon its neck, had finally fallen and been dragged until the weight stopped the runaway. The face of the unfortunate fellow had escaped, and so young and so fair was it, even the hardened soldiers were touched.

"He insists upon seeing an officer," said one of them. "Claims to have secrets to tell."

"Place him upon the porch and call a surgeon. Where did he come from?" Somers was strangely affected.

"Don't know, sir. He came riding headlong through the rebel pickets, I think, and they shot him. We didn't shoot at all, for at first the horse seemed to be loose, and when we did see the young fellow on him, we knew he was too near gone to escape. We had orders against unnecessary alarms, and so we ran him down." The surgeon came and laid open the jacket of the now unconscious sufferer. He waved back the curious group and motioned for Somers to approach.

"A woman!" he whispered.

"Is it possible! To my room,—to my room!" The rough soldiers again lifted the frail form tenderly and placed it upon the bed inside. A hurried examination disclosed the wound: a shot from behind had passed entirely through the body.

"She cannot live," said the surgeon gently, as he arose and covered up the white form. "There is not the slightest chance for her." The sentence of death seemed to inspire her with a sudden consciousness. She opened her eyes widely, and they rested in wonder upon the blue uniforms and strange faces.

"What has happened?" she asked weakly. "Where am I?"

"You have been wounded, madam," said the surgeon, "badly wounded; but you are in friendly hands."

"Ah!—Raymond—told me—that he had—had arranged with—the picket—to pretend only to fire,—oh, they have—killed me!" She shuddered, but with sudden return of full consciousness she cried aloud, "My papers!—they are valuable!—where are they?"

"We have none, madam."

"Oh, God!—what agony!—oh, sirs, I suffer, I suffer so——!"

"Drink this," said the surgeon, placing a glass of stimulant to her lips; "more if you can; it will sustain you."

"In the saddle pockets,—my papers!" Her eyes closed in exhaustion. A young officer who was sent to find the documents came back quickly:

"Saddle trailing underneath; pockets empty." She heard him and understood.

"Lost! Then—I, too—am lost. Raymond!—Raymond!" She turned her face away and wept silently.

"Gentlemen," said Richard Somers hoarsely, "will you leave us? I know this unfortunate woman." He was instantly the focus of wondering eyes, but for a moment only. The little group saluted in silence and withdrew.

"Louise!" he said sadly, standing by her side. The eyes of the woman were fixed on him as he sought to control his voice.

"Who spoke?—who called Louise?"

"It was I——"

"Richard!"

"Yes; sadder, older,—but Richard still. God knows I speak the truth when I say I have nothing in my heart for you but the tenderest sympathy." Her eyes clung to his face through the spasm of pain that twisted her body and drew the beautiful mouth into a thin line of scarlet.

"How may I help you?—I would help you, Louise, if I might."

"Tell me—upon your soul's honor,—is—is—it—death?"

He covered his eyes and stood silent. She waited in agony; he did not answer her.

"Death!" she said in horror. "Help me! help me, Richard!" Sobs shook her, and she stretched out her hand to him as one who is drowning. A cry burst from the lips of the manly soldier, a cry no less agonized than hers.

"Louise! Louise!—I would give my life to help you! Don't speak, don't look at me that way!"

"You must help me,—you must! Quick,—let me whisper! He will come,—he won't refuse now! He was—to come—soon! The marriage—must!—must!—be fulfilled! Bring him!—bring him!—to me! Bring my child!"

"Impossible, Louise," he cried. "You do not know what you are saying. He is beyond the enemy's lines!"

"Ah—but,—but he is—coming! Water!—water!"—he placed the drink quickly to her lips—"coming, Richard! Bring him!—I am dying,—tell him—I am dying;—I—Louise,—dying! Nanon! Nanon!"

"I am a soldier," he said, "sworn in my country's defence. My life belongs to my country,—not to myself. No one would give me permission to go on such an errand. And if I were captured I should die as the spy dies!"

"Richard,—you and I—are—in God's presence!"

"Yes; in the presence of God!"

"Would I lie—oh, would—I lie—now?"

"No."

"Kneel here!—I shall tell you—now! I swear in His presence—I have loved no man in life—but you!—but you!"

"Hush!" he whispered, chilled and shocked, seeking to release his hand.

"Believe, oh, believe me!"

"I cannot!"

"Believe!"

"I cannot,—I would if——"

"Believe—believe me—Richard." Her hands tore feebly at a slender chain that had slipped down into her bosom, and drew a little locket into view. He recognized it.

"I believe you," he said gently at length. And he did; he had never doubted it in his heart.

"It is the last prayer of the woman—who in all these years—of suffering,—shame,—has loved you! Go to him! He will come,—my child's life,—save the child for,—her mother's sake! Let me see her!"

The soldier had faced every danger of the battle-field without a tremor. In the presence of this woman's awful agony his heart failed him. "The lost papers—duplicates—duplicates! Richmond is yours,—Lee's army—destroyed!" He stood up then, and was cool, his eyes reading her pale face as an open book. He turned to the door.

"Surgeon," he said, "come to this poor girl. Louise, I will return." He rode to head-quarters and laid before his chief all the facts. A long discussion followed.

"It is a desperate venture, General, and if I fail—death! I know that. But if I succeed, it may mean life for many a man in this army. Still, let me be frank; I shall go not for that alone."

"The decision is with you, Colonel. My advice is against your plan. And yet—if that information opened the road to Richmond—it would mean General Somers."

"I have your permission?" There was no answer. "I shall start in thirty minutes, then," said Somers. The General gave his hand in silence and turned away.

"Avoid capture," he said sadly. Day by day familiar faces were passing from him.

"I shall not be captured. If it comes, it will be a soldier's death," was the reply. He reëntered the presence of Louise clad in the uniform of a Confederate captain. The old negress was with her, and, hat in hand, a young man, her son, was delivering a message to her. Somers caught enough of the words to gather that he came from Richmond.

"How did you pass through the lines?" he asked abruptly. The negro grinned and was silent. "Can you guide me through—quick, man, speak." The negro looked at the uniform.

"Yes, sah. But it's er long ways now,—an' through the swamp, too."

"Louise, for your sake and the child's I shall try. If I return no more,—it will be because I—have failed!"

"Come—to me, Richard,—kneel. And now, God—bless you. 'Tis a sinful woman's prayer,—but He will hear—even me, a murderess!"

"Murderess! Louise!"

"I tried to kill him,—tried to end it! I fired to kill in my despair;—it was the wrong man! I saw dimly—through the blinds—another woman's room—under the light of a match only!—and I killed him,—an innocent man!"

"Louise!—In Richmond,—through the blinds,—a year ago?"

"Ah, you heard of it?"

"I was the man."

"It cannot be!"

"It was a wing-room. She was kneeling before me, and the bullet struck here!" He drew aside his hair and rested his finger upon a white spot. "Brodnar——"

"God is comforting me," she whispered. "The rest will come." Tears streamed down her cheeks from her closed lids. Somers chose the moment to leave her.

"Keep her alive until morning," he said to the surgeon: "I will come then—or not at all." And then to the negro, "Now, my boy, one hundred dollars in gold if you guide me safely into Richmond and back. Will you need a horse?" The negro shook his head.

"No horse can cross whar I gointer go." He led away briskly into the Chickahominy swamp, and when Richard Somers found the stars again he was within the lines of his enemy with the Richmond lights in sight. Not until then did he remember that he had no knowledge of Raymond Holbin's whereabouts. He stopped, amazed that he had failed in this vital matter.

"Do you know Mr. Holbin in Richmond," he asked of the negro,—
"Mr. Raymond Holbin?"

"Yes, sah, 'course I know him. We all b'longs to es ma."

"What! Then that house back yonder! Whose is that?"

"Dat's his house, sah, I reck'n. Don't nobody come out but him, to see es little gal."

"His girl! Her name,—what is her name?"

"Calls 'er Chicky most generally. Sometimes he call 'er Nanon." Somers stopped then and stood with his face towards the stars in breathless reverie a few moments.

"My boy," he said, "you saw the woman who was shot?"

"Yes, sah."

"She is dying; that is her child and she does not know it. Here is

all the money I have with me; it is yours if you will go back with all your might and tell her about the child. Do this, my boy, and God will bless you."

"How you gointer get back, marster?"

"That doesn't matter!—go! go! Here is your money—be quick now!"

"Bring it along wid you, marster." The negro vanished as a shadow within a shadow.

"And now, Louise," said the soldier as he plunged on into the city, "God is comforting you!"

So far as the chance of detection was concerned, Richard Somers was as safe on the streets of Richmond that night as in his own camp; but he realized that perhaps he had a difficult task before him to find Raymond Holbin. And if he found him, what then?

The city was in a turmoil. Excited men and women crowded the streets and wounded soldiers were on every side. There was to be little sleep that night in Richmond or in the next five to come, for the fate of the city hung in the balance during the seven days' battle. Somers carried off his novel experience boldly, and passing into the Spotswood Hotel he sought a directory. His search for Holbin's name was at once successful, and, taking a note of the address, he went forth and prepared himself for the final trial. His safety lay in the character of the service he was rendering to the woman to whom Holbin owed much. At least, he argued so. How little he knew the depth of villainy he was about to probe!

A policeman directed him to the address secured, and he found himself before a spacious and pretentious mansion of the older style. There were lights in front and he hesitated, prompted by some intuition. If he could get to the rear, he imagined, and question a servant, the risk would be less. There seemed to be a garden and a wing, and upon a side-street he found an entrance through an iron gate, which stood ajar. Entering and passing a horse tied in the shrubbery, he approached the wing-room without connecting the place with any impression of memory; but suddenly, as he neared the closed door, the plashing of a fountain smote his ear, and the experience of a memorable night rose to mind. The iron gate, the gravel walk, the shrubbery, and the wing-room! All were there; and above all the low music of the fountain. Then, swift as a flash of lightning rose his promise. He was pledged not to enter. But as he stood, his mind confused and without power to measure the significance of the new facts, the door opened and a young woman stepped out. The light from the iron lamp swinging overhead fell full upon her. He saw that her face was womanly, sad, and beautiful, a face hallowed by the sufferings of others like unto those he had seen so often in convent and hospital. A vague

half memory of it arose in mind. He lifted his hat instinctively as she paused in surprise.

"I fear you have made a mistake," she said gently. "Whom do you seek?"

At the sound of her voice he uttered a low cry; and then,—

"Frances!"

At the same instant she recognized him and started forward; but, checking the impulse, she drew back, stunned and distressed.

"God has arranged it for us," he said, a glad note in his voice. "I have found you without seeking; I have looked into your face without knowing,—why—what is it?" The girl had drawn beyond the reach of the arms stretched out towards her and was dumbly shaking her head.

"What does it mean?" she said in fear, her voice trembling. "Why are you here in that uniform?"

"Upon a mission requiring the utmost secrecy, Frances; discovery would cost me my life! I shall explain——"

"A spy! You a spy! Ah, I can believe all the other things now,—they told me only the truth!" She began to wring her hands; but, suddenly drawing up her slender figure, she said:

"Captain Somers, leave these premises at once,—and Richmond, or I—yes, even I—will give you up to the law." He saw her mistake, but he was as proud:

"You condemn me without a hearing."

"Your uniform, your presence in this city condemn you!"

"No Somers was ever a spy. I have risked my life to help a dying woman," he said quietly. "I came here to see a man named Raymond Holbin."

"Raymond! What of him?"

"You know him, then?"

"Yes! Yes! He is here,—in this house!"

"Take him my message, and we part for all time, Frances; tell him that Louise is dying—tell him to come here to me——"

"Louise! Oh, sir,—wait! Will you not tell me who is Louise?"

"A lovable woman whose life has been a failure. It was she who fired the shot that night—not at me who once loved her, but at Holbin as she thought, the man who has brought her nothing but sorrow."

Amazed and dumb, Frances was regarding him with questioning eyes.

"And the child?" she began weakly.

"Ah, there is the most pitiable part of it. Holbin has never married Louise." The girl covered her face an instant.

"Forgive me," she said. "I wronged you—my friend!"

"You do not say *my husband*! So let it be."

"I cannot," she answered in great distress, "when I think of my poor boys dying and dead all around me!—some day, when it is all over, perhaps;—but not now, not now! But oh, sir," she exclaimed, looking in terror about her, "come inside, come in; the danger is frightful."

Somers drew himself up and saluted: "Kindly deliver my message. I shall wait here."

"You must not,—you shall not! Quick, sir, into my room."

"It is the room of a young girl," he said; "if I am discovered there the life that I lose is as nothing compared to her loss!" A struggle was going on in her heart. Her face was white, and a wan smile dwelt upon it.

"It is your wife's room," she said, "and you will be safe there."

He took the hand, touched his lips to it, and suffered her to lead him in.

Above their heads, a woman, hearing every word, leaned out a moment. The upward glare of the swinging lamp lit up her face, savage in its vindictive joy. As Richard Somers entered the room the woman overhead closed the blinds gently. The floor she traversed gave no warning to those below.

XVI.

THE woman who leaned from the upper window of the wing of the Brookin residence that June night in 1862 was the ever-cautious mother scanning the outward route chosen for her son, who at that moment was in his room concluding his arrangements for a perilous enterprise.

The time had arrived when Raymond Holbin was to risk his future upon one bold stroke. If he failed, he was no worse off than at the moment, unless, indeed, he should be captured. With the Brookin fortune dissipated by war, Richmond presented but few attractions for him. If he succeeded in all that his busy mind had planned, life held for him Frances, revenge, and wealth. The cause for hesitancy lay in the possibility of detention and discovery; for although the papers which he so highly valued were, as he supposed, unintelligible to any mind other than his own, he was a Confederate officer, and desertion meant death. He had secured three weeks' leave to go South upon urgent business, but this did not alter his liability. What passed through the mind of this man as he sat in his room that night may be imagined. It may be assumed that he thought of Louise, who with bogus despatches in her saddle pockets and falsely informed had gone to her death upon that distant road. Holbin had actually ridden nearly to the point with her; had ridden until warned. He had waited when she left him until the fatal volley was fired, and then, terrified, fled

home and took refuge in his room. His mother, cool and unflinching, had sought him there, a mute question upon her pale face, and he had roughly, fiercely ordered her away. For, let justice be done him, he had this time in his weakness executed the dictates of a stronger will than his own. He had not intended to be fair with Louise; he had intended to desert her again, and leave her to find her way out of Richmond as best she might, and he did not then intend to return; but the murder was not a part of his plan.

He was unnerved and unfit for the enterprise which now meant so much for him. Arrayed in the worn uniform of a Federal prisoner, his papers and pass safe within his breast-pocket, his horse concealed in the garden, Raymond had been on the point of venturing forth when a sergeant reached the house with an official communication requiring an answer. The soldier stood at the front door, and with prompt decision the woman who left the rear window hurried to that point.

"Quick!" she said; "run around to the side gate and come to the wing-room. A Yankee spy is there. Kill him if he attempts to escape. A thousand dollars if you kill or capture him." The soldier ran, cocking his gun as he entered the side gate. The mother went at once to her son's room. She met William, who was bringing an answer to the soldier's letter.

"Yes'm, he's in es room," he said. The light in her son's room shone through the transom. There was no time to explain to Raymond. Knowing his violent and excitable nature, and remembering his disguise, which he might forget if there was an alarm below, she noiselessly turned the key in his door and glided on to her room. But Raymond had left his room immediately after handing William the note, and was already approaching Frances's room below. As he passed the hall entrance, the door leading from the apartment into the garden opened and husband and wife entered. With a cry of amazement he rushed into the room, drawing his sword as he entered.

"Who are you, sir?—why are you in this room?" he asked angrily. Somers drew his sword instantly and confronted him. Holbin had paused and was staring wildly.

"Richard Somers!"

"Yes!" Somers gently put aside the slender form which instantly interposed between him and the man he had sought. His eyes scanned the familiar uniform of his old enemy in doubt.

"Speak out, sir!"

"Spare your voice, Raymond Holbin. I came with a message for you. Louise is dying in my camp; I was unable to resist her prayer. She implores you to go to her to right her wrongs, for her child's sake. Go, if you are a man, and can: let this marriage take place: do something for the miserable woman whom you have so deceived."

"She was not killed then!"

"She is dying!" said Somers, shocked and sickened at the matter-of-fact question. "Did you suppose that she was dead?"

"Yes. She insisted upon trying to run the gauntlet." A light dawned upon Somers. A cry of horror escaped him, and all the old enmity for the man came rushing over him again.

"You encouraged her! You knew she was going to her death! You sent her under a false promise;—her statement!—Frances, Frances, out of this room! God has sent me to avenge Louise. Madman, murderer, we settle many debts to-day." Blind, almost, with his rage, Somers rushed upon his enemy. Their swords clashed as, facing each other, the two men circled about the room. Then Holbin's sword went down. With incredible quickness he avoided the thrust which was almost a part of the disarming blow, rushed to the casement window, leaped into it, and burst open the blinds. His hand thrust in his bosom quickly reached backward: a pistol flashed. At this instant the sergeant rushed into the room, saw the blue uniform escaping through the window, and the extended pistol. He levelled his gun and fired. The man in the window reeled back and plunged headlong into the room.

"It couldn't be helped, Captain," said the soldier, lowering his weapon. "Once outside he would have given us a long chase. Did he hit you?" Well might he ask the question. Captain Somers was deathly pale as he looked upon the body of his foe.

"No," he said; utterly at a loss to understand the situation. Frances, in the moment of the tragedy, reeled against the wall, sick and faint, but the instinct of a woman whose loved one is in danger instantly rallied her to her senses. She was the first to realize the full significance of the soldier's action.

"You have saved our lives," she said weakly; "any reward you may claim is yours. The man was evidently a spy." Her hospital experience and familiarity with tragedies had served her well. But the strain was fearful, and she covered her eyes again.

Brief as was the respite for Somers, it was sufficient. Passing his arm around her, he urged her out of the room.

"Three minutes—keep everybody out for three minutes, and I am safe," he whispered. White as a ghost, but brave, she took her stand at the foot of the stair and waited.

Somers returned and bent above the figure of his enemy, his mind at work. The reference by Louise to the despatches, the blue uniform, the horse tied in the yard, the hour, and the character of the man aroused a multitude of suspicions. From the pocket he drew a sealed packet and a folded paper, the latter a pass through the lines. There was no time for an examination of the package: the soldier, leaning

upon his gun, was waiting. Promotion for Somers was in sight; but he had entered the room with an avowal that he could not disregard.

"Sergeant," he said, "take this to the War Department; it will bring you promotion, I think. The honor is yours."

"But, Captain, it was you who really did the work. Were you after him?"

"Yes," said Somers slowly, "I was looking for the man and had reason to suppose that he was on these premises. I came in to find him. He evidently entered this room in—desperation! Go at once, Sergeant, and send an ambulance. What family lives here?" He asked the question in support of his character as a stranger.

"Captain Holbin's, sir! He is up-stairs."

Full of the importance of his secret, the soldier hurried away. Somers passed through the hall and out through the other door into the garden, lifting his hand towards Frances. Steps were approaching the stairway; she passed quickly to the outside and found him waiting.

"They will find him in the uniform of his country's enemy," he said, "and the papers from his pockets will prove him a spy. I am unknown. The soldier will say that a Confederate officer pursued the guilty man until he took refuge here, and disappeared." The girl stood mute and silent before him.

"Farewell, Frances," he said.

"Farewell, sir." He looked at her a moment in doubt, and in silence left her. When he glanced back over his shoulder he saw her white form still motionless under the tree. A horse near him whickered inquiringly; he untied him and rode out. As he approached the gate a shriek reached him from the wing-room, and turning he spurred back again. Frances was reëntering the room.

"Wait!" he cried in agony,—*"Wait!"* He threw himself from his horse and was instantly at her side. "Frances, Frances, is it thus we part? Think what it means! Will you not give me one word?" She turned slowly and wearily upon the step.

"There is nothing to say but 'farewell.' If I were a mother, and my son came to me as an enemy of Virginia, I should say the same to him."

"You do not love me, then," he said bitterly; "love forgets, forgives everything!" She lifted her face, white with an unspeakable suffering.

"Father in Heaven, Thou knowest my heart! Thou knowest how I have atoned to my own people for him; how for him I have ministered to my enemies;—Thou knowest, Thou knowest! And now," she said sobbingly, "my heart breaks,—I am weak! Will you not go?—A mother is in this room with her dead!"

"To-morrow begins a bloody struggle; and I would wish to carry

with me into eternity, if I perish, one kiss from the woman I love,—my wife! Will you refuse me that?" She covered her face with her hands; then suddenly she threw her arms about him, her lips to his. He held her a moment, white and silent. Pushing him from her, she turned to enter the house, but sank upon her knees, leaning her head against the door. Bending over, he laid his lips in one long kiss upon her curls, and in silence left her.

XVII.

RICHARD SOMERS did not need his pass that morning, nor have to explain why he, if a paroled prisoner, was wearing the uniform of a Confederate officer. That uniform was his salvation in his wild ride upon the crowded road, for aides and couriers were rushing to and fro and no one questioned him. Day was breaking as he neared the front, and the tumult of a great battle surrounded him. He passed cavalry, moving infantry and artillery, and was soon swallowed up in the confusion. He had no knowledge of the topography of the country; there was no chance to use a pass in that mass of confused men,—he could only move forward with the host. An officer, reining up violently by his side, gave him an order to carry to a struggling line that, half enveloped in its own smoke, reeled back in front of a wooded slope on which some guns were being handled desperately, and on that slight eminence as he approached in a mad gallop he saw at intervals the familiar Stars and Stripes. He passed the Confederate line, at that moment badly broken, its officers riding as madly as he up and down it in an endeavor to rally it, and, seeing here his only chance of escape, took it. Burying his heels in the flanks of the terrified animal he bestrode, he headed straight for the battery. He swung back in the saddle as though endeavoring to stop a runaway horse. A little thicket screened him for one instant, and emerging beyond that, he lifted his handkerchief in the air, waved it, and with the speed of the wind swept on into the lines of blue. Strong hands seized the bridle; and then a cheer went up from the battery. Colonel Somers was with his own again.

Somewhere in the records of the government is told how one battery, the focus of artillery and infantry, held back for hours the tide of battle that day: somewhere is preserved the names of those who fell, and of the few who, at last, with despairing strength dragged back the guns that had not been dismounted, and saved them from capture; but no official record preserves the picture of a wrecked and half demolished cottage by the roadside, the body of a frail child dead in the arms of a dead woman visible through the shattered timbers. The

picture lives to-day only in the memory of a soldier, who, standing before it a moment under the bursting shells of that June morning, covered his eyes and murmured a prayer.

To this same place in the after years came one day in June a man and woman who tenderly laid flowers upon a grave beneath the one cedar which had escaped the battle's wrath. A slender shaft of marble stood above the grave, and upon it was carved the name of the dead woman who slept beneath. By the grave a rose-vine was growing. Its upward branches clung to the tree and let fall long streamers of white blossoms, peace banners, in the breeze.

"I planted it here when I gave the place to the boy who brought you through the lines to me that night, Dick. It is a Lamarque, too. I wanted her to share the white rose with me,—to sleep peacefully under it always. For somehow, Dick, I have always felt that once you loved her, and that you loved me at first because she had taught you how to love." She lifted her blue-gray eyes and rested them upon the manly face of her companion; a tender light was gleaming in their misty depths. "And I am glad, my husband, that her brief life was blessed even for a little while with the worship of a brave gentleman's heart." He drew her towards him, and her face grew radiant against his breast.

"God bless them both, mother and child!" he said gently: "and God bless you, Frances, my wife!"

THE END.

ZIONISM

BY I. ZANGWILL

Author of "The Children of the Ghetto," "The King of Schnorrers."

IT was in Philadelphia—the City of Brotherly Love—that the first piece of work for modern Zionism was achieved. For here, in Baldwin's world-famous works, was turned out "a Mogul Locomotive Engine, having three pairs of coupled wheels and a two-wheeled swing bolster truck, for the Jaffa and Jerusalem Railroad."

The whistle of that engine is the key-note of the new movement. Palestine is no longer the mystic dream-place of angels and prophets, the land whose very soil Jewish thought figured as animated with a holy abhorrence of murder, licentiousness, and idolatry. It is a country like any other, only worse. The electric cars whizz past the mediaeval peace of Milan Cathedral, and Zion's Hill is no longer safe from the *Funiculaire*. The world's childhood is passing, with all its charming and fantastic visions of fairies and fiends, and even in Jerusalem Whitman's "years of the modern, years of the unperformed" must have their tardy turn.

And, in harmony with this modern *Weltanschauung*, comes the prospectus of "Zion, Limited," the conception of "The Jewish Colonial Trust," with its capital of two million pounds in one pound shares, for the regeneration of Palestine and its ancient people.

When the steamship was first launched, a son of Philadelphia and the projector of an American Jerusalem, Mordecai Manuel Noah (whose fame *Noah's Times and Weekly Messenger* yet preserves), prophesied that it was the steamship which would ingather the Jews from the four corners of the earth. And who can doubt but that Steam and Electricity—which have given our earth a nerve-system—must transform the problem of Israel?

The object of Zionism is not, however, to ingather Israel or to fulfil the prophecies. No great wave of national emotion, of longing for a theatre in which to work out national or religious ideals, has passed across the globe, like some wireless message, finding rapport in the Jewish soul everywhere. Jerusalem has been indeed a goal of Jewish pilgrimage: but the aspiration has been to die there, not to live there: or if to live, then in that sequestered student-life which is only a shadow of living. Religious and racial emotions are indeed enkindled by Zionism; but they did not enkindle it. Zionism is not the outflaming of the nation's spirit. Israel has been too cowed and crippled to be capable of active energizing, and had not Pharaoh become too outrageous,

Israel would never have dreamed of going. Zionism is not spontaneous combustion: it is the flame of the hammered explosive.

The object of Zionism is to alleviate what Heine called the *Juden-schmerz*. The Jewish evil is twofold, the external evil of Persecution, the internal evil of Isolation. It must suffice here to consider the first, without entering into the more esoteric investigation of the self-inflicted sufferings produced by the Jew's attempt to maintain a religious and racial independence in every country of the Diaspora.

It is saddening to say—after the honest efforts of noble-minded Christians to give the Jew the favor of a fair field—that there is no country in the world in which it is not a disadvantage to be a Jew. Max Nordau exaggerates but little in asserting that a Jew must be three times as clever as any other man to win equal success in the battle of life. "Justice for the Jew" has never yet been the spontaneous instinct of the masses or even of the classes. The nations have been hurried by wise legislators into codified compassion and formulated fair-dealing, but even their own laws have not completed their education. "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" have never been more than a glow at the heart of the great and a formula on the lips of the little. Even in the universities of Europe—where, if anywhere, sweetness and light should rule—the most brilliant Jew is subtly and insidiously handicapped in the competition for fellowships and professorships. In Russia, where half the Jews of the world are congested, the Ghetto still partially exists in the shape of the Pale, and the restriction of the mass of Jews to specified towns produces an appalling poverty. In Roumania Jewish children are practically shut out from the public schools. Furthermore, while the Jew is not free from social prejudice even in England and the United States, in most other countries he lives in the shadow of a volcano, whose eruptions are irregular but inevitable, while in the boasted capital of civilization, the Paris exhibition of "Justice for the Jew" has excited the righteous indignation of the rest of the world. And like many other diseases, anti-Semitism is epidemic: it flies—and with no fear of quarantine—from one country to another. Even Sweden, which in the last century sagaciously invited Jews to come in and help it to prosper, has now caught a touch of the German complaint. Or it may be that an all-ramifying Jesuit plot against the Jew is more than the imagination of the author of "Degeneration." Certainly the circulation of the favorite children's book, "*Fleurs de l'Histoire*," with its teaching that the Jew is compact of "treason, roguery, and lies," comes near to systematic poisoning.

Whence this persistent hostility to the Jew? In part, it is doubtless a survival from the Dark Ages, still nourished by the Dictionary, a religious antagonism still fomented by the Christian Prayer-Book; in part, it is a racial antagonism, an episode of the long struggle of East

and West. Commercial competition and industrial jealousy contribute to the compound, and one must not omit the pure joy of malice. "It is for his virtues, not his vices, that the Jew is hated," maintains Dr. Herzl, the leader of modern Zionism. He confounds, perhaps, "struggle-for-life" virtues with real moral virtues. Yet of a sooth the same energy and push and business instinct which are lauded in the Anglo-Saxon, the Scotsman, or the American are set to the bad in the Jew's account. "The poor Jew's virtues," complains Harold Frederic, a sympathetic observer, "are negative and unlovable." The Jew is too meek and sober. The world prefers dash and fisticuffs. In short, the Jew is too Christian. "Honor," says Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, the fairest French critic the Jew has ever had, "is not a Jewish conception." As if it were the appanage of every Christian! No one had a keener, a more quixotic notion of honor than the above-mentioned Noah, who was as ready with sword and purse and pen as Cyrano de Bergerac himself. All these generalizations about the Jew are absurd. You cannot, as Burke says, draw an indictment against a whole nation. Though it is true that the prosperous Jew who has shaken off the culture of the Ghetto and not yet taken on modern culture is one of the most disagreeable types our planet has produced, yet the deepest reason of anti-Semitism, it seems to me, is simply that the word "Jew" exists. Nothing gratifies the mob more than to get a simple name to account for a complex phenomenon, and the word "Jew" is always at hand to explain the never-absent maladies of the body politic; a word, moreover, already admirably surcharged with historic hatred, bigotry, and repugnance. The countless noble Jews in every age and clime do not seem able to reach down to the popular consciousness. Barney Barnato is a proverb, while the Baroness de Hirsch passes away practically unnoticed. The exhaustless munificence and impeccable financial reputation of the Rothschilds are neutralized by the rigor of Isaac Gordon, the multinominal money-lender.

"Why does not the world pick out Mr. R. as the typical Jew instead of the flaunting, vaunting type?" asked the *Jewish Chronicle* in an obituary panegyric. "Why should his lack of ostentation be less Jewish than the gaudy showiness of some other Jew? Why should not his reserve, his modesty, and his rectitude be regarded as typically Jewish?" The question is almost an Irish bull. Paradoxical impasse! Unless the Jew shrieks, "Walk up! Walk up! Behold in me the most dignified man in Creation," his quiet dignity must go unregarded.

Again, the notion that Jews form an alien section of the nation cannot be driven out, even with a pitchfork. They may call themselves Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians, but the question is, not what they call themselves, but what Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians call them. They may offer body and soul to the

Fatherland for generation after generation, but a Goldwin Smith will arise to ask "Can Jews be patriots?" And every now and then every nation will have sudden spasms of pseudo-racial self-concentration—Pan-Slavism, Pan-Hellenism, and other panics of Pan-ism demanding the immediate elimination of the Jew. Even in hybrid Belgium a native politician explained to me that the Jew did not represent "true Belgic ideals." And this in Brussels, where two idioms live on opposite sides of the same street! From time immemorial Jews have dwelt in Algeria. We hear of them in the sixth century under the Visigothic kings. After the Spanish persecutions of 1391 Algiers was a great centre for Jewish exiles. Yet the parvenu French conquerors, who have scarcely been settled there half a century, regard the Jews as "foreigners," as witness last year's riots. Dr. Herzl's paper-State was conceived in a panic, under an outburst of Jew-hatred in Vienna. But, looking at the whole situation in cold blood, who can say that there is no basis for his despair of Christendom?

How remedy the *Judenschmerz*? There are four possibilities, and four only: 1. National Regeneration; 2. Religious Regeneration; 3. Disappearance; 4. No remedy.

The last we must pass by with a bare recognition. The third, though recommended by some of the best Jewish intellects, is not so easy as it sounds. The second—considered as proceeding on a basis of final emancipation of Judaism from a soil or the dream of Palestine—is the alternative solution to Zionism, though Zionism does not exclude it. There is much to be said for the American ideal, expressed crudely in the formula: "Washington is our Zion." But the Jews of America cannot be said to have done much as yet to make "the word of the Lord go forth from" Washington, and perhaps to expect the *Judenschmerz* to be allayed by pulpit talk is to dream even more deeply than the denounced Zionists. I am only called upon here, however, to discuss the Zionist solution.

There are some curious resemblances between Dr. Theodore Herzl and the aforementioned Major Noah, who in 1825 begot the still-born New Jerusalem on the Niagara River. Both begin by reconstructing the Jewish State in minute detail on paper, with scant reference to or appreciation of actual psychological and political conditions; yet both are men of the world, lawyers, journalists, dramatists, and—humorists. In New York, Mordecai Manuel Noah tells the smartest story, writes the wittiest paragraph of his day. In Vienna, the Hungarian Doctor of Law achieves fame as the author of "A Book of Nonsense" ere he writes the *Judenstaat*, to which his enemies would give the earlier title. Both men are anything but democrats. For if Herzl does not appoint himself "Governor and Judge of Israel," he has the same sense of leadership of a blind mob whose interests he must represent in *tête à*

tête with kings and emperors. Perhaps it is the playwright's habit of moulding events in the dream-world that leads to these attempts to manipulate the tougher material of the real.

This tall, impressive, black-bearded figure, with a head that I have elsewhere compared to an old Assyrian king's, first dawned upon me in my humble London study some three years ago and unfolded the as yet unpublished project. Dr. Herzl wished me to get him a representative Jewish audience, and this though he was only in England for three days. By what I shall always regard as a social miracle, I found myself two days later presiding over a goodly gathering of "Maccabæans" at which the unknown Hungarian—dropped from the skies—gave to the world the first exposition of his scheme in an eloquent mixture of German, French, and English. England the Doctor has always regarded as the *pou sto* for his leverage to move the world: the one European country free from Anti-Semitism and famed for its practical genius and financial steadiness. Hence the "Jewish Colonial Trust" has its head-quarters here. But the conversion of English Judaism itself the Doctor has not yet effected, or in a very minor degree.

Dr. Herzl's first notable achievement was the creation of the Zionist Congress, which has just met for the third time. The first gathering of Jewish delegates from all parts of the world, on reunion bent, was as unique in history as the Peace Congress itself. Many perilous moments were glided over at this first Congress at Basle, but Dr. Herzl was the focus of unbounded enthusiasm, and the resolution was arrived at "to found a public legally-secured home in Palestine." Like Major Noah, Dr. Herzl had begun with the dream of a State anywhere, so long as it brought Jewish independence and freedom from persecution: but like Noah he soon realized that the magnetism of Palestine was too great to be resisted, and as a practical statesman he enlisted on his side the immense force of this sentiment. In so doing, however, he handicapped himself with the enormous countervailing difficulties, to conquer which he is not equipped by religious faith in "the Prophecies"—unless he acquires it *eundo*. For—in this unlike Noah—Dr. Herzl does not pretend to more than political Judaism. He is of the moderns, modern,—an engine-driver, not a Mahdi. And with him is associated Max Nordau, whose polemic against the stock religious ideas may be read in any of his works. To most Jews and all Christians, herein lies a paradox. But if we look for people's religions in their emotional and practical attitude towards life and their fellows, and not in their verbal intellectual opinions, we shall, I think, find as much lip-profession of irreligion as of religion, and there is no need to take either Dr. Herzl or Max Nordau at their own estimate as unbelievers. Herzl's tears at the sight of the Holy Land held perhaps as much religion as those of any of the weepers at the Wailing Wall.

And if the leader is thus affected, how much more the followers! It is certain that the success, even the partial success, of his project would promote a religious revival among the Jews, perhaps even in the world at large: thus National Regeneration would mean Religious Regeneration, too, and the *Judenschmerz* would be undermined from both ends.

But no one in the world has a harder row to hoe than the Jewish idealist, mocked by an unbelieving generation, libelled by antagonists, harassed by coadjutors, zealous or jealous, his sanity questioned by his foes and his originality by his friends. "What filth I must wade through!" he writes to me pathetically. It may be the real founder of modern Zionism was the pious Rabbi Mohilewer of Russia. But what is the use of quarrelling over the glories of an unaccomplished movement, or distributing the laurels ere the day is won? It is enough for the moment that under Herzl's leadership the cause of Zionism has made vast strides, that since he began his propaganda organs have been created or captured for Zionism in almost every capital of Europe, as well as in the United States, and that the joint-stock scheme for raising the sinews of peaceful war—Herzl's individual conception—has already attracted enough—one-eighth—of the two million pounds demanded by the Prospectus to justify going to allotment. If the children of Israel have not yet gathered from the four quarters of the world, they have at least sent their shekels. The applications for shares would gladden the heart of a collector of stamps.

As I understand Dr. Herzl, though his charter gives him what his critics denounce as a "roving commission," he designs to use his capital for four purposes: first, to obtain political concessions from the Sultan tantamount to a legal recognition of Israel's settling in Palestine, with something akin to local government; secondly, to obtain commercial concessions for railroads, harbors, etc., that may perhaps be sold at a profit; thirdly, to purchase land; fourthly, to subsidize poor immigrants in establishing agricultural colonies or factories. He is strongly opposed to any continuance of the present immigration into Palestine, even of Jews of substance, for this but sends up the price of land, without achieving any legal recognition of the Jew's position, and makes negotiations more difficult. Let us come into Palestine, he says in effect to the Sultan, as into a State in which we are not regarded as *Uillanders*, and we guarantee you—apart from any sums in cash—the growth of a prosperous modern community at the heart of the world, an intermediary between East and West, which will push out railroads to India and Bagdad, and regenerate Turkey as well as Israel. That the Jews are to migrate *en masse* has never been suggested: a recognized centre of Jewish life is to be set up, which will be left to its own evolutionary impetus; a centre of gravity which may be trusted to attract the persecuted and the patriotic. Rothschild may re-

main at Paris without the pretext of the embassy. In two points "The Jewish Colonial Trust" differs from an ordinary joint-stock scheme. It does not prophesy the percentage of profit, it does not admit the shareholders to any real control of their funds. A hundred founders' shares possessed by the Executive Committee carry as much voting power as all the other shares put together. The shareholders are thus practically the Committee, and the Committee is practically Herzl. He is not a director, but he is more: for he directs the directors. Perhaps only thus can great things be done in this world.

While the Western Christian is generally not unsympathetic towards Zionism, the Western Jew is generally in bitter or contemptuous opposition. The "Trust" has even alienated good Zionists. Pecuniary pocketings, if not by the chiefs, at least by their parasites, are inevitably insinuated. But the bulk of the Western Jews at least would shrink from Zionism, even if they themselves got the pocketings. They urge 1, that it is unnecessary; 2, that it is unpractical.

Under the first head it is further contended that Zionism is dangerous, plays into the hands of the anti-Semites, with their cry of unpatriotism, and disturbs by raising prices the beneficent agricultural colonization already proceeding in Palestine: that it is, religiously, a blasphemous attempt to force the hand of Providence; spiritually, a misconception of the true future and mission of Israel; intellectually, a mere caricature of the exaggerated nationalism which has temporarily replaced the eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism; and politically, an undoing of all the constitutional rights Israel has won so painfully from civilized communities. Under the second head are summed up its own inner difficulties: the artificiality of the passion for Palestine, the difficulties of migration thither, the peculiar difficulties of Palestine through barrenness, fanaticism, political complications, etc., the incapacity of Israel for self-government, the immiscibility of Eastern and Western Jew, the inaptitude of the Jew for agriculture, as evidenced by the slow progress of the Hirsch colonies in the Argentine, and the failure of the Rothschild colonies in Palestine to pay: and for climax the absurd unworkability of the Herzl Trust with its unknown and unpractical directors hailing from obscure and unpronounceable places.

Whether Zionism is unnecessary I cannot now further consider: I shall examine only whether it is unpractical.

The case against Palestine is indeed so black, that one is tempted to say that Zionism would be practicable but for Zion. Even if Palestine were a Paradise it could not really compete with the soil of one's childhood in evoking the tender subtleties of patriotic affection. The passion for Palestine—albeit religious or romantic—must necessarily be factitious. Mr. Israel Abrahams—the learned historian of Jewish life and literature—considers even Jehuda Halevi's love of Zion merely

literary: a poetic idealization. But the actual sight of the Holy City seems to have been as disenchanting to the mediæval Hebrew-Spanish poet as it is to most moderns. To-day its filthy alleys harbor more than forty thousand Jews, mostly pietists, beggars, and artisans out of work. I remember how my heart sank as my horse plodded painfully through the stony desolation that environs it. Much of Palestine is a waterless, treeless waste, wherein the Prayer for Rain ascends annually; where it is moist, it is often malarious. Politically it is under the primitive rule of the Turk, supine and *bakshish*-ridden; not a few Bedouin tribes run wild and anarchic. In a recent attempt of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts to give Jerusalem a much-needed water-supply, so much *bakshish* seemed to be necessary to induce the Turks to accept this generous gift that the scheme was abandoned. Even if concessions were acquired from the Sultan, there is no guarantee that they would not be withdrawn, and it is possible that the Porte only coquetted with Herzl in a Machiavellian effort to solve,—that is, to silence,—the Armenian question. Religiously, moreover, Palestine is the Holy Land of Christianity and Mahommedanism as well as of Judaism, the battle-field of contending fanaticisms, and even should the Jew obtain it, Jerusalem would be held back. Palestine without Jerusalem would be Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. At best the land tenure is insecure. And what is to guarantee the new Judea against a new Crusade, or even the lax Jews against a Torquemada of their own? A return to Palestine also involves the vexatious agricultural question of the restoration of the *Shemitah*, or Sabbatical Year of the Bible; perhaps even the question of the restoration of sacrifices. The German colonies have established a better footing than the Jewish, and so far from returning joyfully to the soil, the Jew is found, in tropic Palestine, superintending the natives at work under the broiling sun, while he leans against a tree under an umbrella. To crown all, the Sultan is known to hate the idea of adding a Jewish Question to the many racial and religious rivalries that beset him. And so the Porte has stopped the further entry of Russian Jews into Palestine, and through the mouth of its ambassador at Washington distinctly declared it will not sell Palestine. Again, Dr. Herzl's following in its heterogeneous range from Polish fanatics to Parisian freethinkers is but representative of the chaos we call Israel. Politically the Jew is a quarrelsome and dissentient animal, and the smallest synagogue has its factions: even the cultured representatives at the Basle Congress could scarcely keep the peace. Some families settled at Cyprus by the Hirsch Fund refused to co-operate even for works of general utility. In London the German Jew despises the Dutch and the Spanish despises both. The East End has just violently shaken off the direction of the West End.

Nevertheless it is the "practical men" who insist too much on these

intestine differences who are really the dreamers. They can never have observed the life of a people, its eternal self-contradictions, its evolution through contraries (as Hegel might put it). Perhaps Dr. Herzl's ignorance of Jews and Judaism, even more than his political insight, saved him from such discouragement, but at any rate he has proved that "the brotherhood of Israel"—one of the two intertangled factors of Israel's isolation—is strong enough to provide a working basis for a common movement towards regeneration on a Jewish soil. And to the other dark clouds there is also a silver edge. The beauty and fertility of Palestine glow still in its ashes; the bleak hill-terraces are covered with the remains of vines and olive-trees; here and there are wonderful splashes of wild flowers. The cedar grows yet on the enchanting slopes of Anti-Lebanon. Re-afforesting would bring back the rain and improve the climate; the planting of eucalyptus trees would allay fever; the ancient wells could be coaxed back. In places Jewish colonies have made "the desert blossom as the rose." There are nearly thirty colonies in Palestine and Syria, and if the majority do not pay, they will. If the Rothschild and Hirsch colonies have made such little headway, it is because they have been philanthropic schemes, not the outcome of self-sustaining enthusiasm. "I started colonies, not to promote Zionism," Baron Edmond de Rothschild told me, "but to give work to the Jews I saw starving in Palestine, and also to disprove the notion that Jews could not be agriculturists." All honor to the noble pioneer, but his millions have naturally impeded the work they have made possible, and, sustained and weakened by this boundless reservoir, his colonies have had more officials than laborers, while rumor hums with far graver instances of maladministration. Baron Hirsch was even less a Zionist. His object was not to integrate Israel, but to disintegrate it: to break up the vast congestions of Jews in Galicia and Russia. He was less Moses than the Destroying Angel, who, according to the Talmud, is also a messenger of love. The report of the Hirsch Colonization Association—with its beneficent activities diffused all the world over—is a pathetic record of a heroic effort to roll a rock up a mountain. It may be prophesied that whatever portion of the Herzl two millions goes to persuade Jews to be what they are not naturally inclined to be, will be as profitless in the first generations at least. It is a waste of force to yoke a winged creature to the plough: and if twenty centuries of artificial selection have made of the Jew an organizing and impatient brain, one must await the equally slow processes of reversion to the rural temperament by force of the new life in the open air. The re-possession of Palestine does not necessarily imply pastoral idyls, and Arabs may quite well continue to cultivate the soil. The Jewish colony of Woodbine in America is organized on a basis of one agricultural to eight industrial families. Invaluable as a return

to Nature will be to the Jew, we must guard against the fanaticism of idyllic idealism. The only value, the only new feature, and the only absolute essential of the Herzl scheme lies in the phrase: "legally-secured home," and if the two millions could secure that anywhere, they would be well spent. For the rest, reliance must be placed on spontaneous immigration, unsubsidized enthusiasm, and individual capital and labor.

It is impossible to believe that the Jewish commercial genius should fail even in Palestine. Already several factories are running profitably; a tobacco plantation has been established, mulberry-trees have been planted for the rearing of silkworms, the tolerable cognac and claret of the colonies are selling in Europe, and with the further opening up of the European market, Palestine could export not only the cruciform flowers, the mother-of-pearl mementoes, and the olive-wood carvings of the holy bazaars, but also olive and sesame oil, soap, conserved fruits, sweets, perfumes, etc. The Turkish rule may be corrupt, but the Jewish Trust could farm the taxes. The Turk at least has not persecuted the Jew, perhaps because the Jew, especially in his Oriental embodiment, is religiously akin to the Mohammedan: both are monotheists; a service in a mosque is very like a service in a synagogue. And if the Turk is a religious cousin, the Arab is a racial cousin. Dr. Herzl's willingness to make the "Holy Places" of Jerusalem extra-territorial, like the Vatican in Rome, suggests a possible compromise with Christendom. The chances of a new Crusade the Jew would have to take: like the eel, he is used to being skinned alive. Should he himself establish an Inquisition, the Jewish heretics could fly to more Christian lands. Turkey's present embargo on the Jewish immigrant really plays into Dr. Herzl's hands. As for the official expression at Washington that Turkey will not sell Palestine, it is only a theatrical death-blow to Zionism: the dagger-blade slips back into the haft. To buy Palestine is not quite the scheme, and even if it were, the Sultan's mind is not a fixed quantity. Sultans' moods come and go—and so do sultans. We cannot perhaps remove the Alps, but who ever heard of a finality in politics, even when fixed in a treaty? Besides, as one who has bargained for hours in Oriental bazaars, I am not to be impressed by the vendor's opening statement. Meantime the word of the Lord goes forth from Zion, and the Sultan's from Washington.

But if the outlook in Palestine is not so black as appears at first sight, it is still black enough to discourage all migration save the Herzlian and the heroic. To reestablish a sort of Jewish State on the ancient soil is an ideal that at least quickens and elevates the Jewish consciousness everywhere, and the reward of success would be as much to the millions without as to the myriads within. But to promote further Jewish immigration into Palestine with no such object is

simply criminal. The *Chovevi Zion*—an organization for slowly and prosaically colonizing Palestine with Jews—possesses neither the inspiration of the ideal nor the pretext of the practical. To establish a single cultivator and his family on the holy but sterile soil costs from five to six hundred pounds. The only legitimate sphere of this association's activities is the pauper Jewish population already established in Palestine: here, among the younger generation, lies its sole excuse for existence. Jerusalem may still fulfil its function of a spiritual and scholarly centre for Judaism,—feebly as it has hitherto fulfilled it, the contributors to the *Chalukah* have at least had a moral glow for their money,—but for mere colonization, minus a political idea, go anywhere but to Palestine. Why not solve the Russo-Jewish question in Russia itself? It is the most practicable theatre, perhaps the only possible one. Siberia is understood to contain enormous tracts of fertile land. The American soil still offers the advantages enumerated by Major Noah. Canada, like the States, has the blessing of Anglo-Saxon administration. Cyprus, where a beginning has been made, is near Palestine, and has the romantic association of having been placed under the British flag by a Jewish prime minister. In a privately published German pamphlet—to which I am permitted to refer—by the celebrated Orientalist, Dr. Paul Haupt, of Johns Hopkins University, strong reasons are alleged for selecting the district between the Euphrates and the Tigris, the richest land of antiquity. "Whoever succeeds in planting a firm foot in the heart of Western Asia, between the Mediterranean, Black, Caspian, and Persian Seas, will win the prize in the partition of the Earth." The Biblical flavor of "the blessed word, Mesopotamia," makes the country indeed almost as appealing as Palestine, into which its population if prosperous would ultimately overflow. For protection against the anarchic bands of Bedouins, Dr. Haupt suggests that old soldiers shall form a proportion of the settlers and thus constitute a defensive militia. Dr. Haupt's scheme—which has the advantage of being formulated by a non-Jewish theorist—avoids the initial political and religious difficulties of the Holy Land, besides offering a far richer agricultural and industrial field, and engineered by practical financiers might well move quicker than Herzl's.

To sum up, if a Jewish State, even a State in Palestine, is impracticable, it is less because of the external difficulties than because of the internal unwillingness of the Jews. Without an inner enthusiasm for immigration no number of millions of pounds could avail. This enthusiasm, now confined to a minority, may spread as the prospects improve. But even a Jewish State would not remove all the *Judenschmerz*. Only a quack could offer one simple remedy for so complex a disease. Of the three possibilities, National Regeneration, Spiritual Regeneration, and Disappearance, I am inclined to accept all, to offer a three-

fold solution of the long historic tragedy. Those who believe Israel's isolation a harmful superstition should absorb themselves in the environment. Those who believe Israel has yet a mission, that is better served by diffusion than by concentration in a petty State, should make of themselves centres of righteousness everywhere, and assert, not withhold, their ideals in civic and national life. For the orthodox and persecuted masses in semi-barbarous countries a State would be a boon. But these possibilities are all ideals, and none is easily translatable into actuality, a State least of all. It is even possible that when the moment came, realizing the immeasurable value of his Jewish subjects, "Pharaoh would not let the people go."

Hence the last word of all seems to approach the fourth possibility—that there is no remedy. Even this would not be a word of unique despair: as much might be said of the countless other tragic problems that beset the thinker—for the *Judenschmerz* is only a fraction of the world's suffering. But the chances are that, even if Dr. Herzl's scheme break down, and Dr. Haupt's scheme never develop, the Jew in semi-barbarous countries will, with the gradual advance of civilization, be relieved of his unjust burdens, and that when emancipated politically, he will either disappear or undergo a religious regeneration.

FOREBODING

BY SAMUEL MINTURN PECK

IF love could pass as die away
 The summer winds at ebb of day
 That through the amber silence stray,
 Sweet heralds of repose,
 Whispering in the ear of Night
 The memory of the Morning's light,
 The fragrance of its rose,
 Then we might love and never dread
 The awful void when love is dead.

THE WEATHER-VANE

BY CLINTON SCOLLARD

BLOWN by each gust that sweeps the hollow sky,
 Soft as a lute-note, or as bugle shrill,
 The weary bond-slave of the wind am I,
 Forever working his inconstant will.

THE HOME OF GILBERT WHITE OF SELBORNE

BY MRS. JOHN LANE

Illustrated by Edmund H. New.

I.

CERTAIN books are like Nature. One questions them as little as one criticises the beauty of the sunrise. Who cannot make out a list of such works? Have not many of them, arrayed in youth, come down the centuries to greet us? Are not the "Arabian Nights," "The Pilgrim's Progress," "Robinson Crusoe," "Gulliver's Travels," "The Vicar of Wakefield," Walton's "Complete Angler," and many more? Some are very old; some belong to our own times; but all of them bear upon them the stamp of immortality. That Gilbert White's "Natural History of Selborne" belongs to the elect no one will deny who has in any way followed the career of that famous book. To go to Selborne, this quaint Hampshire village, is, as it were, to make a pilgrimage to the past: so interwoven are its traditions, and even the aspect of its quaint lanes and cottages, with the memory of its greatest son. If it is cruelly rumored that Selborne did not know how great White was until after his death, is not the world full of Selbornes? Now it reveres his memory, and every nook and cranny connected with his placid life is proudly pointed out. Indeed, heroic but vain attempts have been made to refresh the memories of ancient cottagers, with a view to discover slumbering reminiscences of the good Curate. If it be added that Gilbert White had a distinct aversion from the thought of having his portrait painted, and that there is no picture of him, it will be seen that—apart from a lifelike description—there is just a chance that his personality may fade away like an old daguerrotype.

In an article which is desultory and not biographical, it is needless to go into all the details of his peaceful life. Gilbert White was born at Selborne Vicarage, the home of his grandfather and of his father, on July 18, 1720; and he died at the Wakes, June 26, 1793. Educated at Basingstoke, at the age of nineteen he went to Oriel College, Oxford, with which he was connected as fellow all his life, and the various livings offered to him and refused were all in the gift of his Alma Mater. According to a recent biographer, only one storm was destined to ruffle his placid career. It is like opening an ancient linen chest, about which still lingers the perfume of dried lavender, to read of this old romance, in which, perhaps, his happiness was wrecked. The lady of his heart, Miss Hester Mulso, married another man, and became Mrs. Chapone, a well-known writer in her day. It is a comfort to know that he weathered

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the storm of his youth, and that in later life he and Mrs. Chapone exchanged many friendly letters. His great work, "The Natural History of Selborne," began as letters to another distinguished naturalist, Thomas Pennant, followed by others to Daines-Barrington. The first-dated letter is marked August 4, 1767, and the series extends over twenty years. Mr. Barrington encouraged Gilbert White to publish these letters, and the first edition appeared in 1789. It may interest the curious to know that the original MS. was sold in 1895 at Sotheby's for nearly fifteen hundred dollars. The publisher of this work, destined to be so famous, was Benjamin White, Gilbert's brother, and the pub-



THE WAKES

lisher of Thomas Pennant's "British Zoölogy." There has just been discovered at the National Portrait Gallery by its director, Mr. Lionel Cust, and placed at my disposal, an unpublished letter of Gilbert White which indirectly throws a singular light on this same Benjamin,—Benjamin, who was first and foremost a publisher and secondly a brother. Also it establishes the curious fact that the trend of the family was towards natural history. There was, it seems, another brother, John White, who was military chaplain at Gibraltar, and who was so true to the family bent that he wrote a "Natural History of Gibraltar" and offered it to his brother Benjamin, who refused it, and so it disappeared or was destroyed because John White, like many another man

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under similar circumstances, was discouraged. Mr. R. Holt White, the present head of the family, adds an explanatory foot-note to this letter of Gilbert White's to the wife of his brother John in which reference is made to this lost MS.:—

"To

Mrs White
at the Vicarage-House
at Blackburn
Lancashire.

"SELBORNE
"Nov. 2nd '78.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I thank you for your last letter, which gave a much more favourable account of my brother's health * than any that I have received for some time: and may, I hope, be followed by many more to the same purpose. You may tell my brother that Dr. Chandler † has read over *every part* of his work with great attention; and approves of the whole much, and was much entertained with many parts: but does not, as my brother knew before, relish the systematic manner in which it is drawn up. He has in several parts with his pencil altered several expressions, but chiefly where the same verbs etc. are used two or three times in a sentence: such slips must necessarily befall 'opere in longo': with the matter he has never meddled. I have also read over said work with great care (the insects very lately) and approve much of the whole, which discovers, I think, great discernment and application. Here and there I have flung in a small marginal note. Many parts are to me curious and interesting: and the whole Fauna contains much more anecdote than ever I met with before in such a work. Some parts are, and must be in so long a work, less engaging than others. The hawks, the *hirundines*, the turdi, the Gallina, the *insects*, are favourites with me: not but the other ordines have each their merits: but one man is pleased with one subject, and one with an other.

"I wrote to Nep. Ben. ‡ last saturday, and made the proposal mentioned to me. But I would have my brother at present sit loose to such matters, and not let his mind be agitated about this event, or any other; but keep himself as quiet as possible. As for the work I could wish to see it published.

"The present new Lord Chancellor has given a decree point blank against us with respect to Mr. Holt's concerns. §

"Mrs. Ben. White ¶ continues still in a bad state. My brother Tho: and Molly ¶ are just returned to my house: my brother has been ill, but is re-

* John White suffered from rheumatism (after so long, sixteen years, residence at Gibraltar), of which he ultimately died. His widow then lived with Gilbert White at Selborne till *his* death.

† The eminent antiquary, fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, who greatly helped Gilbert White in preparing the antiquities of Selborne. He was at this time visiting Gilbert White at Selborne.

‡ Son of Gilbert White's brother Benjamin, the publisher.

§ This sentence refers purely to a private matter. Mr. Holt was Gilbert White's great-uncle.

¶ First wife of Benjamin White, the publisher.

¶ Mary, the only daughter of Gilbert White's brother Thomas, who assumed the name of Holt. He was F.R.S. Mary White was the *little girl* mentioned at the end of letter as saying the rooks were saying their prayers at evening time.

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covered. I have sent word to Harry about his rents. (Harry White had property at Selborne.) You did right, I think, in allowing the repairs.

"Your loving brother,

GIL. WHITE.

"When you see or consult your physician at Manchester, should he not be asked whether he has any opinion of electrical applications? My brother * formerly used to amuse himself with electricity."

It is unfortunate but more than probable that an important work of natural history was lost to the world because of a lack of encouragement. Had Benjamin White been more of a brother and less of a publisher we might perhaps have listened to the inspired gossip about southern birds and insects and crawling things, as we have for over a century listened to the wise and charming observations on the birds that make an English landscape melodious. Then, too, consider the postscript of this old letter. Is it not nearly pathetic to us who live in an electric age to read this casual reference to a force that has revolutionized the world? With what gentle unconsciousness this man of serious thought touches upon it in passing. To return, however, to the letters which constitute Gilbert White's great work.

It is a little discouraging to believers in the uprightness of human nature to find that Thomas Pennant, to whom many of these letters are addressed, used their contents in his own work without a word of acknowledgment.

Since that first edition of 1789 nearly a hundred different ones have been issued, an extraordinary testimony to the charm and value of a work which will last as long as Nature weaves her spell. One of the rare first editions I saw the other day in the library of a beautiful mansion near Selborne, bought over a hundred years ago by the great-grandfather of the present owner (who probably knew Gilbert White well). This very copy, which I touched with such a feeling of reverence, it is pleasant to think the great naturalist may have held in his hands. It

* John White (of Gibraltar) was an ingenious mechanic. As a young man, before going to Gibraltar in 1756 (I think), he took the lead in building the summer-house (or Hermitage) on the hill at Selborne and in constructing the Zig-Zag path up the Hanger. Largely at his brother Gilbert's instance he collected and arranged his natural-history notes made during his residence at Gibraltar, and offered them to Benjamin White for publication. The latter did not see his way to do this, and John White was much discouraged, because, as his brother was by this time the chief natural-history publisher, he thought no other publisher would take the MSS. Gilbert White did not agree with this, but the MSS. was never published, as John White died soon afterwards. His introduction, containing a description of Gibraltar, etc., in his handwriting, is now in my possession.—R. HOLT WHITE.

was a venerable volume, bound in calf, with copper-plate engravings representing Selborne as it was a hundred years ago; and, so little has the village changed since the days of Gilbert White, that could he return, he would stroll along the lanes with a sense of familiar delight,—and so I seem to see him, a slim, upright figure, in wig, knee-breeches, and silver shoe-buckles.

II.

I LEANED contentedly out of the "Queen's Arms," the little inn standing in the curving street of Selborne, now bathed in the splendor of a harvest moon that touched the world with fretted silver. Never shall I forget the poetic glory of that scene—the little cottages, quaintly outlined in silver, point their thatched roofs clean-cut against the sky, pricked with a few stars, not quite eclipsed by the borrowed light of a dead planet. Through the windows, with their diamond-shaped panes, the lamplight fell with human warmth on the white, cold moonlight. The smooth, curving road—white as snow—faded into the distance, and nothing broke the silence but the monotonous cadence of the cricket proclaiming autumn in a foreboding chant high above the grasshopper's restless undertone. At my elbow the sign of the "Queen's Arms" swung in a rising breeze, and the Union Jack, patriotically unfurled at the end, flapped softly. Over the way stood four cottages as they have stood for centuries. What sorrow and joy have they not contained! what uncounted generations have crossed their modest thresholds! Behind their thatched roofs I could see the gloomy ridge of the Hanger. (Hanger is a Saxon word for the wood-clad side of the low hills, which gives a suggestion of wildness to the peaceful charm of Selborne.) Over the way the moonlight just touched the slanting roof of the old house where Gilbert White lived and died: or, perhaps, he did not die, but faded into the earth he loved so well, and so perhaps came softly—as he would have wished—face to face with Truth. While one end of the curving road faded into nothing, the other straggled up-hill to the grocery-store on the Plestor. (Plestor is Saxon for the play-ground, or village green.) In the midst stands a spreading sycamore, about which some good Samaritan once built a seat; and here the cottage children play in the sunlight, while at night the moon pierces the boughs and overhears the speechless eloquence of village lovers. At the top of the Plestor, in cheerful proximity to the living, lies the ancient church-yard about the quaint Norman church where Gilbert White addressed his ordinary parishioners, in distinction from those winged and singing ones, the four-footed ones, and those even who modestly crawled, who all filled up his calm life. The church is a good deal renovated, of necessity; but, with Norman traditions, it is not quite at its ease in the presence of nineteenth-century pews and a nineteenth-century organ.

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Human beings, however, are pretty much the same, and the little boys are marched out just before the sermon with the same subdued yet hilarious clatter as in the days when those were living and young who now lie in the church-yard under the moss-grown head-stones from which the centuries have softly wiped out the dates. Even the five bell-ropes hanging under the belfry of the church are pulled as they were centuries ago; for as soon as the vicar has pronounced the benediction, five Selborne men grasp the ropes and pull with a will, and the chimes ring into the peaceful landscape. Beside the weather-beaten church-tower stands the venerable tenant of the cemetery, a yew-tree so old that it is respectfully mentioned in the Domesday Book. Tradition gives it twelve hundred years; and amazingly young and vigorous it looks, and its mighty branches make a grateful shade on a summer's day; and, sitting on the bench about its gnarled trunk, somehow one feels that to lie under a lichen-grown stone, with the summer sun beating the waving grass on the gentle slope towards the Lythe, within the sound of a bird singing joyously in the old chestnut-tree and the passing patter of a child's little feet, might not be the saddest of fates.

On the north side of the church lies Gilbert White under a moss-grown head-stone, the long grass swaying lightly, just as he would have wished, with no futile word to praise him. Some one has suggested a nice new monument for the old naturalist—think of it! So far, thank Heaven! his grave has mercifully been spared that fatal honor.

The interior of the church, with its rather barren Norman architecture and its crude coloring of white and yellow, contains one unexpected note. Over the simple altar hangs a very fine altar-piece—a triptych—presented to the church in 1793 by Gilbert White's brother, Benjamin. It suggests Holbein, this Northern Virgin, all mother, carefully holding her Christ-child, who pokes a very serious little hand into the golden casket of the wise men of the East: a curious medley of Italian and Flemish faces, which may account for the guess that the picture may have been by the Flemish Mabeuge, coming home still under the influence of Italian art.

From a marble tablet on the wall we can read of the virtues of the famous Curate, who, I sometimes suspect, may have given his worthy flock many a discourse on feathered things;—but, after all, the feathered things brought him very near to God.

III.

FROM Gilbert White's last resting-place to his old homestead, The Wakes, is only one step. In the course of many years and many

owners it has somewhat changed. Still, much has remained unaltered; and, best of all, no one can touch with sacrilegious hand the fields, sloping up-hill to the Hanger, dotted with clustering oak, maple, and ash-trees, one maple sprouting mistletoe and suggesting all the charms of an English Christmas in the country. The Wakes is now essentially a gentleman's estate, with all that goes to make the country residence of a man keenly interested in horses and dogs. It is a rambling old house, modest enough as it lies on the village street, with only shrubs and a brick wall between it and the passer-by; but cross its threshold, and you follow a gracious chate-laine across the low, wide hall into the library which was once Gilbert White's kitchen, his study being on the floor above. From the



THE WAKES

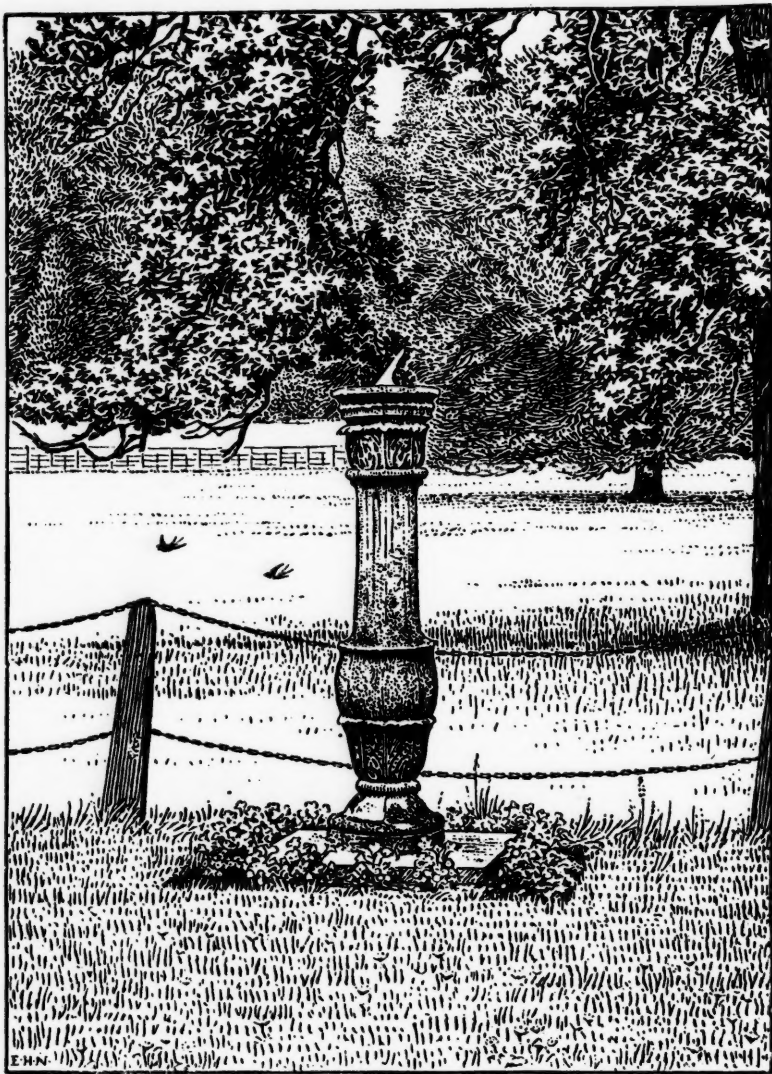
library one steps into the divinest of gardens, framed in, as it were, by melancholy, forest-clad hills, towards which the fields beyond the garden slope gently upward. At the foot of the garden still stands Gilbert White's famous sun-dial, rusted by wind and rain; and through the fields can still be seen the narrow brick path which once led to the summer-house where he observed and studied.

Selborne is even now five miles from the nearest railway station, Alton; and the world disturbs it nearly as little as when he wrote those divinely gossiping letters in which he tells with such delightful accuracy of the private affairs of all the swallows, wrens, cuckoos, nightingales, wag-tails, red-breasts, and the rest of the hundred and twenty varieties with which he was on the most intimate terms. Whether his famous tortoise, Timothy, still lives, I doubt; at least, that venerable creature was not introduced, the task of entertaining devolving on a brindled bull-dog named Peter, blood-thirsty of aspect and angelic of disposition. To speak of Peter is to be led by a quite natural transition to the Selborne flower-show; for there Peter's hospitable heart so rejoiced, he was so innocently interested in the calves of the visitors, that he had to be chained up in the carriage-house, whence he studied the legs that bore their various owners to the tents, the swings, and the dancing with a chastened and subdued series of "yawps."

The owner of The Wakes is the Squire of Selborne, and as such his

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grounds are at the disposal of the villagers for festivities. The object of the flower-show is to encourage cottagers to compete for the best



GILBERT WHITE'S SUN-DIAL

exhibition of fruit, flowers, and vegetables. Many an old dame and many a child tends her little flower-pot on the window-ledge all winter,

looking forward to this day with burning ambition. Such a day it was! The clouds swept softly across a sky of deepest blue; the sunlight fell in golden splashes through the trees; and the village band played divine strains—for all strains are divine on such a sunny afternoon;—perhaps I could have wished a thought less of drum, and the man who tooted on the trumpet may have been carried away by his enthusiasm, but no one cared. I paid threepence at the gate, and found in the tea-tent my own active landlady of the “Queen’s Arms” dispensing tea and cake at twopence a head, supported by her two pretty daughters, until the source of tea and cake ran dry. The many carefully hoarded pennies that flowed in cast into pecuniary shade all the vaunted fables of Klondike. The excellence of the specimens was really beyond praise, grown, as they all were, in a tiny patch of ground. Five shillings was the first prize, and it was noticeable that it always went to the same thrifty souls who knew a thing or two about the ways of nature. There were John and James Cooper: how often they were called out from the ranks to receive prizes I don’t know,—but their pockets bulged. There was the one village policeman arrayed in the terrors of his uniform, but otherwise a mild-mannered man: he also received several prizes. He lives not far from me in a quaint, tiled cottage, bearing the noble inscription “County Police,” and he has an enchanting garden the size of a handkerchief. He possesses a baby, who is not always silent. In moments of exasperation, not knowing its relation to the powers that be, I have sometimes invoked terrible things—I have even said “I’ll send the policeman after you!” When, however, I found that the policeman was its father, I gave up the unequal contest—the baby had won.

This may be a digression from the Selborne flower-show; but I return, and declare that human nature is always the same. I was led to this on searching for my dear old friend, Mrs. Abel Hockaby. She lives beyond the Wesleyan Chapel. A flowering hop-vine in a pot and a bright yellow *calceolaria*—sometimes called “fisherman’s basket”—standing behind her diamond-shaped panes were our introduction. I passed through her little garden between two neat rows of box, and we met in her low-studded living-room. She had an old husband who was ailing badly, poor soul, and she introduced me to his various infirmities with a melancholy zest, while he tried not to look proud. Then she took me to her window plants. Now, in my search for Mrs. Hockaby at the flower-show, where did I find her? Why, right in front of her own two pots, for the little hop and the *calceolaria* had been crowned by a third prize; and there she stood before them, looking at them with an ecstatic expression, as if she had never seen them before, and distinctly interested in nothing else. I tore her away from seraphic contemplation, and bore her to the tea-tent, where she finished this red-letter day

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with the sense of joyous irresponsibility which one feels when some one else is paying the bills.

Such of us as wanted to swing, swung; such of us as wanted to dance, danced. There were sack races and blindfolded races, and one boy broke his collar-bone: so the day may be said to have ended in great glory. Perhaps this is not quite Gilbert White's Selborne; yet it is, so little has there been of change, and the old memories linger with a quaint charm.

IV.

If you go down the village street, you see "life" as understood in Selborne. There is the butcher's shop, opposite The Wakes, just as it stood in the famous man's time. I defy the world to produce another so quaint and so enchanting. It is just like a toy-shop with a slanting roof, and it hides coquettishly behind three gnarled and pollarded lime-trees trained flat against it in Dutch fashion. From the veranda made by the sloping roof there hang the neatest ribs of mutton, legs of lamb, shoulders of veal, and other poetic joints. So devoid are they of anything sordid or mundane, that I have secretly poked them with my umbrella to assure myself that enterprise was not luring one on with paste-board imitations.

From the butcher's shop one saunters down the road, past the "Queen's Arms," which I feel I own, past the quaintest of thatched cottages, behind little gardens ablaze with flowers, past the policeman's baby staring at nothing with great energy, and past the post-office. The post-office hails me with respect, because of a cable message I once received, which shook Selborne to its foundations. Across the way is the smithy. I hear the click of the hammer, and I smell burning horn. As I pass, a big, gray cart-horse, with shaggy fetlocks, pokes his nose out of doors, meditating. Behind him is a confused flare of flames in the dimness, and I get a silhouette of the smith bent double over a huge gray hoof. Farther down the street stands a new brick house with clear windows and an immaculate flower-garden sulking behind tall, gray palings; and one knows, as surely as one knows anything, that this house will have nothing to do with the other houses. It is a Pharisee of a house; and one is not at all surprised to read, in neat, clear text over the door, "Where wilt thou spend Eternity, with Christ or in the Lake of Fire?—Which?" Somehow it is like a blight on the sunny afternoon. I decline to answer, and vanish, followed by the hateful stare of four plate-glass windows.

Selborne exercises the charm of taking you into its confidence, and before you know it you are overflowing with local pride. Was I not glad to find that in Selborne parish had stood the royal manor of

Edward the Confessor and his good Lady Editha, and that here was the scene of many a Roman battle? Does not the great Gilbert tell us all about it in his "Antiquities of Selborne"? Many a Roman relic has been cast up by the humble ploughshare; and one hot summer, when Wolmer Pond—four miles from Selborne—was laid bare and dry, there was delivered up from its depths over thirty thousand coins struck at various periods of the Roman Empire. Some had been buried in a great earthen jar; others lay piled there as if flung out of a bag in hot haste; and so they were found one summer day. As if that were not proof enough, did not I myself make a pilgrimage to Wolmer Pond and find among the heather on its desolate shore a coin which was beyond all doubt Roman? Still, for a real, lively human interest, it is pleasant to descend just a bit down the centuries. My concern in the Roman legions is rather forced, though I am conscious of a glimmer as I think of the fair-haired Saxon Editha, passing her days in praying, spinning, and weaving in her rude manor-house, ivy-grown, stone-paved, and open to all the winds of Heaven. May the rain have had mercy on her!

In the thirteenth century was founded the Priory of Selborne, from which the Knights Templars hired, at ten shillings a year, close by at Sudington, space for a Preceptory. My strolls have led me in search of this lost Priory—lost all but in name, vested in a rude farm-house. Yet it was a mighty foundation in its day, and I have seen all that is left—a ruined stone coffin half-buried under currant-bushes, and the crumbling bit of a carved pillar, hinting at vanished glory. How beautiful was the site chosen by that shrewd first Prior, Peter de la Roche! Those canons of St. Augustine, with rules so much less rigid than those of the monks, had an enviable lot, I thought, as I retraced my steps through spreading fields and along the Lythe, over the same foot-path where Gilbert loved to stroll. In the valley is a tiny stream that ripples and sings its way by devious paths until it reaches the Thames. Who could ever forget the wild beauty of the Lythe, those sloping meadows with the hills forest-clad on either side and divinely silent but for the song of a bird or the silvery tinkle of a distant cow-bell? It is an enchanted valley, as far removed from earthly interruptions as when, seven centuries ago, the canons of St. Augustine took the same path to the church that I trod. How many a one has rested under the shade of the yew-tree, old even then, and looked across the lovely valley—for Nature alone is immortal!

In those forgotten days the Priory was a power; but it sickened of too much temporal prosperity, which is, perhaps, a drop of comfort for such of us as have not been spoilt in that way; and after many vicissitudes it was in 1459 reduced to no prior and no canons; and so William Waynflete, the famous Bishop of Winchester, who founded

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Magdalen College, Oxford, gave permission to incorporate its revenues with those of that College, greatly in need of funds. Thus to this day the living of Selborne is in the gift of Magdalen College, and the broad acres of the Lythe and many another are hers. So did Selborne Priory cease to be, and in the reign of Henry VIII. John Sharp, a husbandman, hired its ancient splendor for six pounds a year.

V.

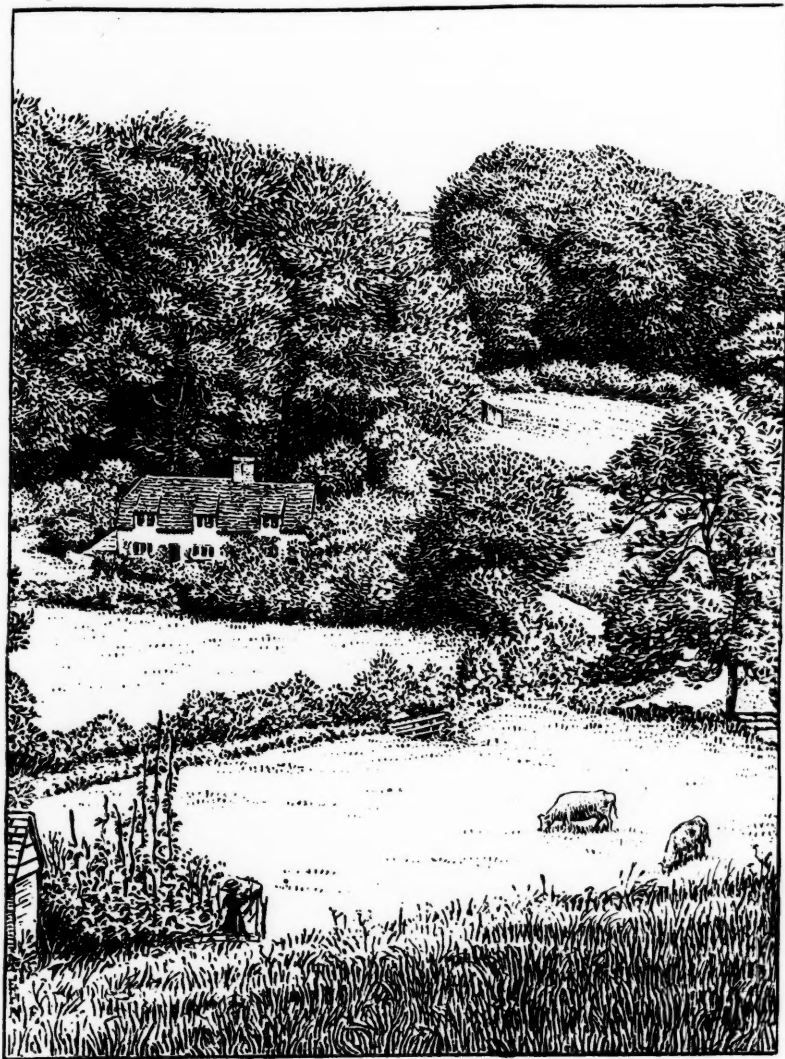
A LONG time this morning I wandered about the church. It was very still, and the sunlight fell on the floor through the slender chancel windows. In the south aisle lie six or seven mutilated slabs with the Templar's cross still to be traced on the crumbling stone. All that remains of the Preceptory is the name of the farm called "Temple"—faint memory of so powerful an order. I stood looking at the broken slabs, and I seemed to see a ghostly procession of Knights Templars riding down the high-road, the red crosses on their white mantles glowing in the sun, and their solemn chargers pacing slowly along under their heavy trappings. All are vanished—save, in the aisle of the old church, a carven sword on a broken slab.

When I left the church I crossed the Plestor, and a descending, curving path between hazel and hawthorn hedges led me into Gracious Street. Whence the name no one quite knows, though Gilbert White says it is of Saxon origin. It is a lovely name, and the first cottage beyond the hawthorn hedge has the aroma of a forgotten village idyl. In the open doorway sat a tortoise-shell cat washing its face, and when I paused she proceeded undisturbed. Under the thatched roof, curiously finished in a delicate tracery of straw, two dormer windows, with leaded panes, looked down on a tablet just over the modest doorway. In the middle was a rude heart with the initials "A.S." on one side, and on the other "R.T.A." A trellised cherry-tree and a white rose against the wall had reached the date 1697 with their slender twigs: a rather modern date for Selborne,—yet two hundred years old, old enough to quiet the most vaulting ambition as well as the tenderest love.

The end of August found the artist still at work in Selborne. The village children had grown accustomed to him, his stool, his sketch-book, and his white umbrella, and took no more notice. So imperceptibly the summer was passing, and the pride of the country lay in full and poetic beauty—the hop gardens. To describe Selborne, and not to describe the hop gardens in which in his day Gilbert White rejoiced, would be impossible. Not even the vineyards of Lombardy have a more exquisite grace than have the lands that stretch in the wonderful beauty of swaying and trellised vine on the slope of the low hills,

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along the valleys and on either side of the high-road. Never was there so beautiful and fresh a green, which in the sorrowful coming of

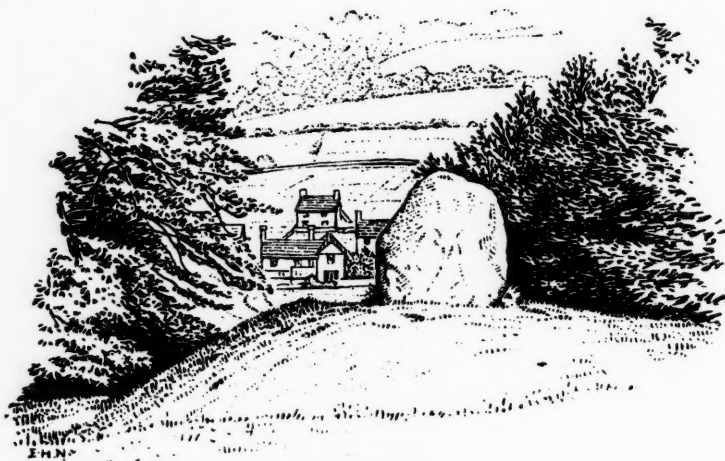


DORTON COTTAGE

autumn still haunts one with memories of spring. On the sloping fields at the foot of the Hanger they lie, heavily laden with ripening fruit, swaying from their long, slender poles with a grace which has the

cadence of music. Between the dense woodlands they grow, their quaint regularity in picturesque contrast to the masses of dark, wild foliage. Alas! the beauty of the hop harvest has its reverse side. No sooner does the time for picking arrive than, as if by magic, there appears a motley crew of hop-pickers—an awful army, recruited from cities, dirty, hopeless, shiftless, for the slums of London have opened and poured them forth.

I pine a little for ancient splendor. I wish I could meet, instead of a tramp, the ghost of a Templar! or even a carnal canon of Selborne Priory. The tramp who lurched towards me was spirituous, and I grasped my parasol with a shaking hand as he went by. Through what wretched mediums the fruits of the earth have to pass! The high-road is alive with tramp pickers—whole families. They sleep in out-houses or in rude shelters put up by the farmers; they carry their worldly possessions in perambulators; and the procession bristles with dirt.



THE WISHING-STONE

"I'd rather have to do with a gypsy rogue than one of those ruffians from the slums," a farmer said to me. "There's a mighty difference in rogues."

But Selborne is not overrun by them as Kent and Surrey are, with their endless stretches of hop gardens. Here the villagers pick and the Romanys wander in for a share of the good times. The Romanys too are dirty and poor and shiftless, but the look of their bright black eyes and the deep glow of their sunbrowned faces are quite a different matter from the haggard pallor of the city outcast.

The feet of travellers do not often stray in the direction of this

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Hampshire village, or long ago a railroad would have disturbed its peace. In Gilbert White's time the roads were of such a nature that, ventured over once, they were rarely ventured over again. Perhaps it is owing to this blessed lack of energy that the world is richer and wiser. Who knows but that if Gilbert White had been interrupted by mere mundane gossip he might have sometimes neglected the concerns of his feathered friends? Sufficient for us that he was: it is idle to speculate what he might have been under more enterprising conditions.

VI.

THE most beautiful view of Selborne one gets from the top of the Hanger, through a cleft in the beech-wood made by some poet of the axe. The Hanger is really the wood-overgrown side of a steep declivity, which rises some three hundred feet above Selborne. Above, a vast common, covered with bracken, wild blackberries, and gorse, leads to the village of Newton Valence. From the cleft in the Hanger I saw the fair world lying in the glory of harvest. The corn-fields, outlined by dark hedge-rows, stood in serried ranks of gathered grain. Mighty hay-racks dotted the deserted fields, or stood like homely sentinels beside scattered farm-houses, whose red-tiled roofs glowed in the last rays of the setting sun. Here and there in the dim distance a square church tower, ivy-grown, or a slender spire, peeped out from masses of trees or clustering hamlets. One low ridge on the far horizon faded into the coming twilight.

At my feet lay Selborne in the midst of hop gardens, harvest fields, and low hills. The beech-trees on either side of the cleft, framing it all in, have a curious downward tilt, as if once a mighty wind had blown them forward, and so, spell-bound, they had remained for ever.



THE ZIG-ZAG

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The last glory of sunset fell through the softly rustling leaves, and lay in golden patches on the underbrush. The twilight gently blotted out the Village, and then The Wakes, with its memories of a good and wise man. In the thatched cottages faint lights were beginning to twinkle. Suddenly through the twilight, from the tower of Gilbert White's old church, the bells pealed forth their sweet, wild clangor. I paused by the Wishing-Stone to listen. From the Wishing-Stone a perilous path called the Zig-Zag leads down-hill to the village. Tradition has it that it is only necessary to go round the Wishing-Stone seven times to have any wish granted. Whether I went on this pious pilgrimage I will not confess; but I did reach the stile at the foot in safety, just as the chimes ceased and the stars began to shine. The stile has grown as smooth as the back of an old violin with the passing of generations of home-spun skirts and corduroy trousers.

When I reached it two lovers were there already, and when they saw me—— But I turned discreetly away; and though the artist may draw that historic stile, not by the shadow of a hint shall the world know through me whose was that blushing cheek, whose the shirt-sleeve that clasped that buxom waist.



THE JOURNEY'S END

BY BEULAH MARIE DIX

Author of "Hugh Gwyeth, a Roundhead Cavalier."

"MICHAEL, hey, Michael! To the devil with your glass, man!" Above the clink of the bottles Cornet Armington's voice shrilled across the dismantled hall; behind him the great door, swinging ajar, let in a whirl of chill air that made the candles gusty.

Beneath their quivering flames a shadow writhed across the face of Sydney Jervoise as he turned, his hand still on his glass, towards the doorway and the boy who stood there. "What need drives you now, Rob?" he cried. "You'll crack a bottle with us——"

"Wine? Now? Drink to the good fortune has fallen us this night, then. Phil Carnaby is taken."

The instant's hush that came upon the drinkers was shattered as Captain Michael Armington dashed his bottle to the floor. "Damn him, body and soul, the sneaking cur of a Roundhead! He'll not come whining after Rhoda again, I'll wager. Where did they take him? Where have they bestown him, Rob?" He swayed to his feet and, clutching the edge of the table, held himself erect.

"Clotworthy and his dragoons," panted young Rob. "They cut his troop to pieces,—the rebels have made him an officer of sorts,—and fetched him hither. There's life in him yet. I gave Clotworthy my pied gelding for his custody."

"I'll make it good unto you, lad," Jervoise said quietly. "They have him without in the court-yard? Come, Michael, we'll not let an old comrade go ungreeted."

Outside the creaking door the night air stirred sharply against the faces of the three officers. Across the slippery cobbles of the wide court the torches cast forth and withdrew long lines of light, and the flare of the smoke that drifted with them blurred out the stars. Yonder, where the black stables yawned, a noisy group of Armington's troopers were gathered, and in the midst they saw lying, as they went briskly thither, Phil Carnaby.

He lay as they had flung him down, his limp body outstretched and his face hidden between his pinioned arms. Under the torch-light his close-cut brown hair gleamed with a touch of gold. His shirt was torn so that his bare shoulders showed beneath; his breeches and boots were grimy with the mire of the court-yard; the strap had gouged deep into the flesh, so his raw wrists were bloody.

"My God! you're a brave sight, Carnaby," laughed Captain Arming-

ton, and with his foot kicked him over so he lay upon his back. He was quite conscious, and his eyes, steady and unflinching, looked up at his captor. But Armington glanced lower, at the smear of red that broadened across the torn front of his shirt. "So you've got your hire at last," he sneered, "for drawing your sword against your God and your King. You'd better have held to us. Your crop-eared comrades have slunk away; be sure they'll not risk themselves to take you out of my hands. You cursed, stubborn dog, will you not answer?" he added, and would have kicked him again, had not the heaviness of his long drinking swept over him.

Armington reeled a little and caught Jervoise about the shoulders, then broke out in a sorry voice: "The devil fly away with all women! She's a curst jade, for all she's my sister. Turn from you, Syd Jervoise, as gallant a gentleman as ever buckled on a baldric, and for the memory of this sorry rascalion! I had not thought a wench could so defy a loving brother——"

"Bah! 'Tis much Rhoda cares for this knave," Rob flung in eagerly. "Was it not she that sent him packing? And she dances to-night, yonder at my Lady Onslowe's, little like a heart-broken maid."

"Then say we make her the happier," Jervoise spoke, his down-bent look on Carnaby at his feet, "with the sight of this gentleman. 'Tis not a two-hours' ride to Onslowe Hall. You, Phil Carnaby, you'll gladly make it, for the sake of the greeting 'tis like she'll give you at the end?"

Carnaby's lips beneath his short mustache moved never so slightly, then set themselves in a hard line; he tried in a hopeless way to turn his head a little on the cobbles, and his eyes closed.

"He must not die yet," cried Jervoise, sharp and sudden. "Dash a bucket of water over him, one of you gaping curs, and clap the saddles on the horses briskly. Look to it, Rob."

With a clattering of hoofs and a slipping on the cobbles they hurried the horses out into the court-yard. They set Carnaby, reeling and unresisting, upon one of the saddles, and lashed him to it with the halter and the surcingle. His chin was down against his neck, and let them curse or strike as they would, he made no response.

Out on the open road, however, Carnaby raised his head. Partly the sharp air it was that, smiting upon his half-naked body, stung him into consciousness; partly the freshness of the wind, after the smoky reek of the torches in the stable-yard; partly the silence, fallen for the moment among his jeering captors, that seemed to him the peace of heaven. They were taking him somewhere, and his wrists were sore. He had been hurt in the side, too, he remembered, but that did not trouble him, for the ache was a dull one; it was the ceaseless fret, fret of the strap upon the raw flesh that was torture.

Straight ahead the road mounted over a ridge, where the tips of the leafless trees sprayed across the dim sky; the lines all blended and wavered to his eyes. The sudden bulk of the two riders loomed hugely before him as Jervoise and Armington gained the crest, Sydney and Michael,—and once, not many years back, they had all three been lads together and proud when they could each lay hands on a horse and slip away for a night-ride on the moors. And Rob, the rogue! had cried to go with them; Carnaby remembered how he had taken up the little fellow and carried him on his crupper.

On the farther side the ridge he could see now the black lowlands rolling away into the night. The horse beneath him slipped on the steep descent, stumbled, and had fallen, if the trooper riding at his stirrup had not grasped the bit. He heard Rob laugh as he swayed in his saddle, heard the high-pitched boy's voice,—“Cannot so great a generalissimo as Cromwell teach his officers to sit their horses straight?”

Carnaby felt again the gush of hot blood from his wounded side that soaked his shirt so that it clung stickily to his flesh. The faintness swept over him, so he drooped forward in his saddle. Neither sky nor woods was visible to him now, just the endless gray road-bed slipping past him, and the hoofs of the hurrying horses beat and beat upon his brain.

Through the thud of hoofs on the trodden sand struck a new sound that made him erect his head. From before him came the unmistakable gurgle of water across pebbles, and then the sousing splash of the entering horses. His own mount was now knee-deep in the ford; he saw the sleek neck bowed, heard the sucking sound, as the thirsty horses about him drew down the water. Carnaby moistened his parched lips with his tongue. “Only one mouthful of water!” he prayed in his thoughts; he did not speak it; his mouth was almost too dry to form the words, and it would profit him nothing.

He could see broken bits of light drifting on the surface of the stream, and when, with a great scattering of the cool water beneath the horses' feet, they spattered out from the ford, he saw on his right hand the moon that had breasted the clouds. “A fair night for a lovers' meeting, eh, Phil?” spoke Jervoise at his elbow.

November weather, yet for the instant the scent of the budding hawthorn was brought to Carnaby. He remembered that same half-moon as it had ridden low on the crest of a black cloud-bank and the feel of the dripping hawthorns—all that day it had rained—as he pressed through the hedge that circled old Henry Armington's close. And Rhoda's hands rested upon his shoulders and her loose hair darkened her eyes as she raised her face to meet his kiss.

The breath came hard and choking in Carnaby's throat. They were dragging him before her; she would see him in all his anguish

The Journey's End

and humiliation, and look on him with the same hard gaze he still winced to recall. For he had ridden to her hopefully that last time, with his captain's sword at his side and his fifty carabineers at his back. He remembered her still, white face and unswerving eyes. "The enemies of my King, they are my enemies." His enemy now, even as Michael,—no matter for him,—even as Rob, who was but a lad and should have in mind something of the old kindness.

The moon made odd, blurry streaks athwart the sombre sky. Her half-disc crackled in an unseemly grin. Under the ghastly light the faces of the men about him were distorted. Thud, thud,—the beat of the ceaseless hoofs was real, but the sound reached Carnaby fainter and fainter. "I am dying," he told himself dully. "Ere I come unto her I shall be dead. I pray God I may be dead!"

Upon his semi-stupor broke Rob's voice: "Light yonder! There lies Onslowe Hall," and then Michael's thicker speech: "Put spurs to the horses. Gallop!"

The pebbles broke away and flew under the swift hoofs. To Carnaby, reeling where he sat, the sky was hurtling past and the world was struck from beneath him. He realized only that very far in the distance danced a point of light that was no star. "She is yonder;" even in his racking pain the thought was present, and then of a sudden, so earnestly he almost spoke aloud, the prayer rose in his heart: "Let me not die, not till I have seen her. However she scorn me, let me see her once more."

The light flared broadly before him. The vast black lines of a house blocked off the sky. The hoofs were deadened on the sward. Scabbards clicked against stirrup-irons as men sprang to the ground. He was down, too; the wet turf pressed against his face, and the pitiless torment of his horse's galloping was ended. "I shall live till she comes," he thought. The blood still was dribbling from his wound, but strength came again to him, enough for him to draw himself a little up on his elbow.

Somewhere viols were screeching; feet clattered on the flagged terrace above him; then under the moonlight he saw, at the head of the terrace steps, a figure all in white that shimmered.

"Come hither, Rhoda," rose Michael's voice. "I've fetched you a guest you should give me thanks for."

"'Tis Phil Carnaby," shouted Rob.

Carnaby's head fell back; he saw the moon peeping down at him, the few sly stars that darted about her. Then he heard the quick rustle of a woman's garments; moon and stars were smitten out as Rhoda bent over him. He felt her arm tremble about him, felt her bosom panting beneath his head. The blood from his wounded side would stain her gown, he thought stupidly, and he tried to tell her so, but his lips forced

out no more than "Rhoda." He saw that her hair fell loose about her face and darkened her eyes.

"Have you no shame, girl?" Michael's voice was sober now. "Rise up, you jade!"

"No." Her voice was low and steady, such a tone as she had used to him that last time, Carnaby remembered. "Had you no shame, no one of you? Loose his hands, Rob, instantly, I command you."

Carnaby's arm, freed now, drooped limply across her shoulder; he was too weary to raise his eyes higher, but he could see the white curve of her throat and her chin that was quite firm.

"I thank you, gentlemen,"—it seemed there were many about them, but it was very still, so her voice sounded loud. "You thought to shame him, to shame me, and you have served us both. For, wounded and dying and disgraced, I love this man better than I love you, Sydney Jervoise, better than a score of your kind. I know it now; you have made me to know it; I give you thanks; I——" Her steady voice was rent with a sudden great sob: "Phil! Phil! O my poor love!"

He saw even her no longer, heard no more, felt not even the agony of his hurt; but when her tears fell upon his face and her lips pressed his, for an instant life fluttered within him. "Rhoda," he whispered. Then his head rested heavier upon her breast, and he lay quiet.

SCOTTISH SPORT AND AUTUMN HOUSE PARTIES

BY IGNOTA

ENGLISHMEN and Irishmen as differentiated from loyal Scots are apt to declare that Scotland owes her present popularity with the British sporting and the leisured classes to the fact that the Queen has never concealed her affection for that portion of her dominions which lies north of the Tweed.

Those who hold this view overestimate the power of loyalty. If their assertion were true, the great English nobility would hasten to purchase estates in the Isle of Wight, for the Queen is quite as devoted to Osborne as she is to Balmoral. It is, however, a significant fact that with the exception of one week in the year, that known as the Cowes week, the Isle of Wight is left severely alone by that section of British Society which arrogates to itself the title of "smart."

Although to many of those who regularly make the Highlands their head-quarters during the three autumn months of the year Sir Walter Scott is only a name, it would be impossible to overestimate the part

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played by the Waverley Novels in the present popularity of the Highlands. It is said that within two years of the publication of the "Lady of the Lake" the post-horse duty in Scotland had more than trebled. Many cultured Englishmen who came to see the wonderful country described by the Wizard of the North remained to shoot the grouse, and it is pleasant to think that Sir Walter Scott towards the end of his life must have become aware how much he had done for his beloved country. Still, not even he can have foreseen what fifty years would bring forth. To take the case of one famous shooting estate, the sporting rental of Glen Urquhart was in 1835 one hundred pounds; it is now four thousand pounds.

Scottish lairds had always taken special delight in the sport of deer-stalking, and when it became known that Prince Albert was an enthusiastic deer-stalker, the sport certainly received an impetus, and the opening of the Highland Railway, which took place in 1863, rendered accessible some of the finest sporting estates in the United Kingdom. Last, but not least, the charms of the Scottish salmon rivers became known to a host of English followers of Izaak Walton. The fishing rental of the Tay may now be said to be anything between twenty thousand and thirty thousand pounds,—that is to say, roughly speaking, about one hundred thousand dollars. There are few more sound sources of income than a good stretch of water on the Tay, the Dee, the Don, or the Spey; even those stretches where only angling is permitted let for very large sums; of course, if any kind of house with good accommodation be added to the stretch of river, a much larger rental is demanded. One of the most beautiful places on the Tay, Meikleour, belongs to Lord Lansdowne, who lets it regularly every year; this year his tenants are to be the Duke and Duchess of Bedford, who are devoted to sport and especially to fishing. In addition to the Meikleour water, which is considered one of the best stretches on the Tay, for it is situated just above Lord Ancaster's Stobhall water, there are attached to the estate some thousand acres of excellent low-ground shooting, and there is also a beech hedge a quarter of a mile long and eighty feet high which is one of the horticultural curiosities of the United Kingdom.

On the 12th of August opens the grouse-shooting, but months before every really good sporting estate in Scotland has been let, generally through a London agent, to some wealthy southerner whose motives may range from a simple love of sport to a desire to ingratiate himself with the great ones of the earth, for there is no doubt that Scotland has become in a very real sense the fashion, and a great many people make a point of securing a good Scotch shooting simply because their friends inform them that it is the thing to do. Some of the finest places on Deeside are taken each year by wealthy South Africans and by American millionaires who know little and care less for the various

sporting privileges for which they are asked to pay so heavy a price. Early in the year 1880 it was estimated that Mr. Wynans by the simple process of outbidding all competitors had turned one million acres in Ross and Inverness into a deer-forest,—that is to say, into waste land,—for which he paid a rental of seventeen thousand pounds a year. In one year Mr. Wynans had the satisfaction of seeing his party bring down a hundred and sixty stags; accordingly, each beast must have cost him about a hundred and twenty pounds.

A very decent shooting may be hired for as little as a hundred pounds, but a fairly good sporting estate, with a comfortable house or shooting-lodge attached, will be let from July 1 to November 1 for one thousand pounds. At one time the rent of a deer-forest used to be calculated at the rate of twenty-five pounds for each stag killed, but now it is said that more than one millionaire has paid something like one hundred pounds for each head. It should be added that in many cases the great nobility, though letting outlying portions of their estates, keep in their own hands the choicest stretch on their rivers, the best moors, and the largest forests; thus the best deer-forest in Scotland belongs to the Duke of Athole and is attached to the best sporting estate in the United Kingdom; it is believed this forest contains fifteen thousand head of red deer. When the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Blair, in the September of 1872, three thousand deer were driven before them. The Duke of Athole is also the fortunate possessor of long stretches on two of the most beautiful and picturesque rivers in Scotland, the Tarf and the Tilt, both famed for their trout.

It is always said that from a letting point of view Perthshire is the best of the Scottish counties, but probably Aberdeenshire runs it close. It is, however, in Perthshire that those who have no desire to be the near neighbors of royalty generally pitch their tent. Mr. Astor seems to prefer Perthshire to any other Scottish county, for this year he has taken the Aberuchil shooting, noted for grouse and black-game.

Although most sportsmen go to Scotland for the grouse-shooting there is also a good deal of pheasant-shooting, and it is a curious fact that this beautiful bird was first introduced north of the Tweed only a hundred years ago. The then Duke of Athole imported large quantities from England and let them fly in the woods round Dunkeld; they all however made their way back to the south. In the border counties the Duke of Buccleuch introduced them after a trial in Dalkeith Park, at Bowhill in Selkirkshire, at Langholm, and at Drumlanrig. The best grouse are said to be found in Caithness, the best partridges in East Lothian, and the best pheasants in Fife. Owing in a great measure to the Prince Consort's indefatigable and far-seeing efforts, the vast tracts of land known as the Queen's forests, lying round and about Balmoral, are heavily stocked with red deer. The Queen is known to take a very

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great interest in the preservation of the game on her Scottish estates, and she expects the younger male members of her family to indulge in a good deal of deer-stalking when they are paying an autumn visit to Balmoral. At one time the Prince of Wales was very fond of this form of sport, and even now when stopping with his daughter and son-in-law, the Duke and Duchess of Fife, at New Mar Lodge, he often takes part in a deer-drive. But the old-fashioned, legitimate form of deer-stalking, when the sportsman went out early in the morning and stayed out all day stalking the monarchs of the glen, has been replaced by the deer-drives where royal visitors are expected and where *carte blanche* as to money can be given. These were first introduced by Prince Albert and are a German fashion. It is, however, fortunate that every ambitious laird cannot indulge himself and his friends with this very tame kind of sport, for were this method to be universally followed the beautiful red deer would soon become as extinct as the dodo.

Curiously enough, there are very few grouse on the Queen's estates, but ptarmigan, on the contrary, are very plentiful. Accordingly deer-stalking in the forests and shooting roe deer in Abergeldie and in the Birkhall woods are the most popular forms of sport on Deeside.

Concerning one very delicate matter there is much more to be said now than used to be the case some years ago. Notwithstanding the fact that some vigorous attempts were at one time made to induce ladies to feel that they were out of place on a grouse moor or in a deer forest, an increasing number of Englishwomen now pride themselves on being good shots. The first lady who in England made a point of always accompanying the guns to the covers was the Comtesse de Paris, the mother of the Duke of Orleans, and, apart from her deeply rooted love of out-door sports, a very womanly and quiet matron. When staying at Sandringham with the Prince and Princess of Wales she went out regularly, and as she was technically—from the point of view of the British royal family—Queen of France, it would have been very bad taste for her hostess, the Princess of Wales, to have objected. Now quite a number of notable women have followed where the Comtesse de Paris led, and one of the best deer-stalkers, without distinction of sex, is Lady Tweedmouth, the aunt of the young Duke of Marlborough and sister-in-law of Lady Aberdeen. Another fact which has in some cases made women welcome additions to Scottish shooting-parties has been that they have in some instances become distinguished as big game hunters in other countries besides the United Kingdom. Notable among these is Mrs. Alan Gardner, the pretty daughter of Sir James Bligh, who has been all over Central India and in the wilder portions of South Africa tiger- and lion-shooting.

The only "killing" form of sport indulged in by the ladies of the royal family is fishing, the Princess of Wales, the Duchess of Fife,

and Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne, being all enthusiastic fisherwomen. When acting as Vice-Queen of Canada, the Princess Louise used to go out in a canoe with natives for guides, and on one occasion she despatched three of her finest fish, of course securely packed in ice, to the Queen at Balmoral. The Princess of Wales and her daughters go out almost every day when staying with the Duchess of Fife at New Mar Lodge, and some two years ago the Duchess landed the largest number of fish ever taken in one day on the Dee by a fisherwoman.

The Prince of Wales does not now own a single acre of land in Scotland. He was the owner some years ago of Birkhall, but he sold the property to the Queen in 1885, and though he always pays a long visit to Scotland each autumn, he invariably stays—with the exception, perhaps, of a flying visit to Balmoral—with the Duke and Duchess of Fife.

Mar Lodge was destroyed by fire four years ago, but it has been entirely rebuilt on the site of Old Mar Lodge, that is to say nearly a mile west of the former structure. New Mar Lodge, as the present building is styled, is one of the most splendid sporting residences in Scotland. Fifty people can sit down simultaneously in the large dining-room, and there is scarce an apartment which has not some fine sporting trophy, including a wonderful display of stags' heads, all shot in the Duke's forests. There are a hundred and twenty rooms in New Mar Lodge, and these include twenty guests' bedrooms and fifty servants' bedrooms. The heating and lighting are effected by electricity, the motive power being supplied by the Falls of Corriemulzie. The Duke of Fife, it is believed at the desire of the Queen, had all the work done by Scotchmen, even the architect being an Aberdeenshire man. All the timber used is pine wood from the Mar forests, and comfort, not splendor, has been aimed at in both out-door and in-door arrangements.

Perhaps the reason why members of the royal family seem to care so little for forming part of a great Scottish house party lies in the fact that with some few exceptions sport, and not personal comfort or convenience, is the object mainly kept in view by those who make a regular practice of going north each autumn. Men are asked not because they are witty or amusing, but because they are good shots, and the lady visitors, though not as a rule chosen on quite the same principles, are expected to give as little trouble as possible and to be quite content with the dull routine of country-house life, without the mild English excitements of garden-parties, private theatricals, race-meetings, and so on. The principal amusement offered to the feminine portion of a Scottish house party is that of attending the local Gathering of the Clans, or Highland Games. These take place all over the Highlands; the Gathering goes on for some days, and for those who have any his-

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toric imagination are very interesting and inspiring. The principal Gathering takes place at Braemar. The Queen is generally present at the opening ceremonies and the Duke of Fife brings over a large party of distinguished guests from New Mar Lodge. Special interest is taken in the dancing competitions: indeed, were it not for these Gatherings it is very probable that the old Highland reels and sword-dances would become obsolete; as it is, everything is done to encourage their maintenance. All the men of the Fife estates turn out attired in their clan tartan to take part in the games, the Duke is always present wearing the kilt, and it is well known that the Queen prefers to see all those surrounding her so attired, at any rate on the occasion of the Braemar Gathering.

The Athole Gathering is always attended by the Duke and Duchess of Athole, who entertain in honor of the Highland Games a great house party at Blair Castle; indeed, the Gathering ball has become almost an annual event, and is greatly looked forward to by the whole of the district.

Many Englishmen claim to be the best shot in the United Kingdom, but probably the only man who really has a right to the proud title is Lord de Grey, the eldest son and heir of Lord Ripon and the husband of the beautiful woman formerly known to society as Gladys, Lady Lonsdale. In one twelvemonth Lord de Grey bagged fifteen thousand head; accordingly, each autumn there is a great competition for the honor of a visit from him, and the host who can number Lord de Grey among his guns is much envied and congratulated by his friends, for his mere presence is a certificate that the sport is at any rate expected to be first-rate.

As the number of sporting estates in Scotland is limited, and the number of those who wish to hire them apparently unlimited, the pleasure of giving a series of sporting parties becomes each year a more extravagant amusement and one which will soon be limited to millionaires. In addition to the bare rent asked for a good shooting, it is very probable that the tenant will be expected to pay the wages of the keepers, the gillies, and of all the other out-door servants about the place; accordingly, those who estimate that each bird costs the host at least a pound are in many cases making a very moderate calculation. In every shooting-lodge and house in Scotland a game-book is carefully kept and should be well studied by any would-be tenant. It by no means follows that because an estate is bounded by a famous salmon river the right of fishing goes with the moor or shooting. A lodge described in the most seductive and attractive terms in the advertisement will often turn out to be a bare, five-roomed cottage with none of the comforts of civilization, save perhaps a few chairs and fewer beds. A couple who take a sporting estate for the first time

should at least be sure that their cook knows something of the conditions of Scottish country life. Many wealthy people are practically catered for by their London tradesmen; that is to say, they have everything with the exception of fresh meat sent up from town every day. Living becomes from year to year more and more complicated, more and more expensive and ostentatious. Not so very long ago shooting-parties were composed wholly of men; as a rule, ladies were only admitted on sufferance, and not infrequently the hostess, whose presence was only required as providing a guarantee that household matters would run smoothly, was compelled to content herself with some near relation or with some other sportsman's wife, who was well aware what would be expected of her. Now, sport is often simply made an excuse for the gathering of a large party bent on amusing themselves at all costs. Even when the men go out to the moors their solitude is broken by an elaborate hot lunch, which is made the reason for the appearance of the ladies.

Out of doors tailor-made gowns, more or less elaborate, are considered in better taste than more flimsy frocks, but even the most determined sportswomen make up for that simplicity in the evening, when the scene in the drawing-room of even a comparatively humble shooting-lodge might recall a box at the opera, so gorgeous are the costumes and so splendid the jewels worn by the women present.

In nothing can a man's character be more truly shown than in the wardrobe which accompanies him each autumn to Scotland. In the same sporting party will be seen the most wonderful and costly of shooting "togs," these generally worn by the amateur sportsman, and the roughest and oldest knock-about suits that have already done good service for several seasons. In the matter of clothes there is no hard-and-fast rule, everyone follows his own fancy, and many Scottish lairds have their out-door garments made by the tailor in their nearest local town. There is, however, one exception to this rule, and that is where fishing is concerned; there, for obvious reasons, the costume must be more or less of a uniform, and must include "waders" made of the best quality gutta-percha, as so much of the fisherman's and fisherwoman's time must be spent actually in the water. Of late years for shooting-suits the Scotch and Irish frieses and homespuns have replaced corduroys and velveteens, and are, of course, very much more practical from every point of view, as these materials are unshrinkable and to a great extent non-absorbent of wet. The kilt is practically going out, but as it is known to be in high favor at Balmoral, where the Queen very much prefers to see the Scottish members of her household so arrayed, this most curious and picturesque of national costumes is not likely to become obsolete.

The much-debated question of tips may be said to reach the acute

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stage during the Scottish autumn season, and in this matter it must be admitted that Americans are great sinners. While protesting vigorously against the tipping system, they unwittingly encourage it in every possible manner, treating, as one penuriously minded Englishman wisely remarked, dollars as if they were shillings, thus multiplying every ordinary tip by four. The Duke of Fife, who in these matters shares the very strong views known to be entertained by the Prince of Wales, has made vigorous efforts to render tipping impossible by putting up a formal notice in the guest chambers of New Mar Lodge. Again, in many of the more important Scottish castles visitors are asked to place their offerings in a box in the hall, of which the contents are afterwards divided up in due proportion among the servants of the establishment. But it is practically impossible to put an end to the tipping of the outdoor men; in sport so much depends upon the keeper or the gilly who has charge of the sportsman's interests, and the knowledge that a handsome tip is forthcoming at the end of the day or of the week certainly makes a difference in the quality of the zeal with which the sportsman finds himself served. It has been roughly estimated that each guest is worth to the head-keeper at least half a sovereign a day,—that is, two and a half dollars,—but too often the *nouveau riche* who finds himself attached to a historic house party will betray his gratification at the fact by presenting the keeper with a five-pound note, and this, of course, "queers the pitch" for those who follow with more humble offerings.

It may not here be out of place to correct one impression which seems very general among American visitors, namely, that the accepting of a meal in a British household implies a tip to the butler or to the parlor-maid. Only the visitor who spends one or more nights in a house is expected to give a tip; as a great deal of hospitality takes place between the various houses in a Scotch or English country neighborhood, this fact, once thoroughly realized, would save American travelers in England a good deal of money and some annoyance, for the keeping oneself perpetually provided with small change is one of the most disagreeable corollaries of tipping.

Of the great North of England sporting estates there is none that can compare with Lord Lonsdale's splendid place, Lowther Castle, where a few years ago the German Emperor was so lavishly entertained. Lowther may be quoted as the model English sporting estate as opposed to the Scottish. Everything is there done in a very stately not to say solemn fashion, and a well-known London wit, parodying Robert Burns's grace, once declared:

"Of Lowther inside, Lowther out,
Of woods that Lowther gird about,
Of Lowther's moor, and Lowther's fell,
Thank God, there's nothing left to tell."

THE STRENGTH OF GIDEON

BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Author of "The Uncalled," "Folks from Dixie," etc.

OLD Mam' Henry, and her word may be taken, said that it was "De powerfuller' sehmont she ever had hyeahd in all huh bo'n days." That was saying a good deal, for the old woman had lived many years on the Stone place and had heard many sermons from preachers, white and black. She was a judge, too.

It must have been a powerful sermon that Brother Lucius preached, for Aunt Doshy Scott had fallen in a trance in the middle of the aisle, while "Merlatter Mag," who was famed all over the place for having white folk's religion and never "waking up," had broken through her reserve and shouted all over the camp ground.

Several times Cassie had shown signs of giving way, but because she was frail some of the solicitous sisters held her, relieving each other now and then, that each might have a turn in the rejoicings. But as the preacher waded out deeper and deeper into the spiritual stream, Cassie's efforts to make her feelings known became more and more decided. He told them how the spears of the Midianites had "clashed upon de shiels of de Gideonites, an' aftah while, wid de powah of de Lawd behin' him, de man Gideon triumphed mightily," and swaying then and wailing in the dark woods, with grim branches waving in the breath of their own excitement, they could hear above the tumult the clamor of the fight, the clashing of the spears, and the ringing of the shields. They could see the conqueror coming home in triumph. Then when he cried, "A-who, I say, a-who is in Gideon's ahmy to-day?" and the wailing chorus took up the note, "A-who!" it was too much even for frail Cassie, and, deserted by the solicitous sisters, in the words of Mam' Henry, "she broke a-loose, and faithly tuk de place."

Gideon had certainly triumphed, and when a little boy baby came to Cassie two or three days later, she named him Gideon in honor of the great Hebrew warrior whose story had so wrought upon her. All the plantation knew the spiritual significance of the name, and from the day of his birth the child was as one set apart to a holy mission on earth.

Say what you will of the influences which the circumstances surrounding birth have upon a child, upon this one at least the effect was unmistakable. Even as a baby he seemed to realize the weight of responsibility which had been laid upon his little black shoulders, and there was a complacent dignity in the very way in which he drew upon

the sweets of his dirty sugar-teat when the maternal breast was far away bending over the sheaves of the field.

He was a child early destined to sacrifice and self-effacement, and as he grew older and other youngsters came to fill Cassie's cabin, he took up his lot with the meekness of an infantile Moses. Like a Moses he was, too, leading his little flock to the promised land, when he grew to the age when, barefooted and one-shifted, he led or carried his little brothers and sisters about the quarters. But the promised land never took him into the direction of the stables, where the other pickaninnies worried the horses, or into the region of the hen-coops, where egg-sucking was a common crime.

No boy ever rolled or tumbled in the dirt with a heartier glee than did Gideon, but no warrior, not even his illustrious prototype himself, ever kept sterner discipline in his ranks when his followers seemed prone to overstep the bounds of right. At a very early age his shrill voice could be heard calling in admonitory tones, caught from his mother's very lips, "You 'Nelius, don' you let me ketch you th'owin' at ol' mis' guinea-hens no mo'; you hyeah me?" or "Hi'am, you come offen de top er dat shed 'fo' you fall an' brek yo' naik all to pieces."

It was a common sight in the evening to see him sitting upon the low rail fence which ran before the quarters, his shift blowing in the wind, and his black legs lean and bony against the white-washed rails, as he swayed to and fro, rocking and singing one of his numerous brothers to sleep, and always his song was of war and victory, albeit crooned in a low, soothing voice. Sometimes it was "Turn Back Pharaoh's Army," at others "Jinin' Gideon's Band." The latter was a favorite, for he seemed to have a proprietary interest in it, although, despite the martial inspiration of his name, "Gideon's band" to him meant an aggregation of people with horns and fiddles.

Steve, who was Cassie's man, declared that he had never seen such a child, and, being quite as religious as Cassie herself, early began to talk Scripture and religion to the boy. He was aided in this when his master, Dudley Stone, a man of the faith, began a little Sunday class for the religiously inclined of the quarters, where the old familiar stories were told to the slaves and explained. At these meetings Gideon became a shining light. No one listened more eagerly to the teacher's words, or more readily answered his questions at review. His admonitions to his family took on a different complexion, and he could be heard calling across a lot to a mischievous sister, "Bettah tek keer daih, Lucy Jane, Gawd's a-watchin' you; bettah tek keer."

The appointed man is always marked, and so Gideon was by always receiving his full name. No one ever shortened his scriptural appellation into Gid. He was always Gideon from the time he bore the name out of the heat of camp-meeting glory until his master discovered his

worthiness and filled Cassie's breast with pride by taking him into the house to learn "mannahs and 'po'tment."

As a house servant he was beyond reproach, and next to his religion his Mas' Dudley and Miss Ellen claimed his devotion and fidelity. The young mistress and young master learned to depend fearlessly upon his faithfulness.

It was good to hear old Dudley Stone going through the house in a mock fury, crying, "Well, I never saw such a house; it seems as if there isn't a soul in it that can do without Gideon. Here I've got him up here to wait on me, and it's Gideon here and Gideon there, and every time I turn around some of you have sneaked him off. Gideon, come here!" And the black boy smiled and came.

But all his days were not days devoted to men's service, for there came a time when love claimed him for her own, when the clouds took on a new color, when the sough of the wind was music in his ears, and he saw heaven in Martha's eyes. It all came about in this way.

Gideon was young when he got religion and joined the church, and he grew up strong in the faith. Almost by the time he had become a valuable house servant he had grown to be an invaluable servant of the Lord. He had a good, clear voice that could lead a hymn out of all the labyrinthian wanderings of an ignorant congregation, even when he improvised both words and music; and he was a mighty man of prayer. It was thus he met Martha. Martha was brown and buxom and comely, and her rich contralto voice was loud and high on the sisters' side in meeting time. It was the voices that did it at first. There was no hymn or "spiritual" that Gideon could start to which Martha could not sing an easy blending second, and never did she open a tune that Gideon did not swing into it with a wonderfully sweet, flowing, natural bass. Often he did not know the piece, but that did not matter, he sang anyway. Perhaps when they were out he would go to her and ask, "Sis' Martha, what was that hymn you started to-day?" and she would probably answer, "Oh, dat was jes' one o' my mammy's ol' songs."

"Well, it sholy was mighty pretty. Indeed it was."

"Oh, thanky, Brothah Gidjon, thanky."

Then a little later they began to walk back to the master's house together, for Martha, too, was one of the favored ones, and served, not in the field, but in the great house.

The old women looked on and conversed in whispers about the pair, for they were wise, and what their old eyes saw, they saw.

"Oomph," said Mam' Henry, for she commented on everything, "dem too is jes' natchelly singin' demse'ves togeddah."

"Dey's lak de mo'nin' stahs," interjected Aunt Sophy.

"How 'bout dat?" sniffed the older woman, for she objected to anyone's alluding to subjects she did not understand.

"Why, Mam' Henry, ain' you nevah hyeahd tell o' de mo'nin' stahs what sung deyse'ves togeddah?"

"No, I ain', an' been livin' a mighty sight longah'n you, too. I knows all 'bout when de stahs fell, but dey ain' nevah done any singin' dat I knows 'bout."

"Do heish, Mam' Henry, you sho su'prises me. W'y, dat ain' happenin's, dat's Scriptor."

"Look hyeah, gal, don't you tell me dat's Scriptor, an' me been a-settin' under de Scriptor fu' nigh onto sixty yeah."

"Well, Mam' Henry, I may 'a' been mistook, but sho' I took hit fu' Scriptor. Mebbe de preachah I heyahd was jus' inlinin'."

"Well, wheddah hit's Scriptor er not, dey's one t'ing su'tain, I tell you,—dem two is singin' demse'ves togeddah."

"Hit's a fac', an' I believe it."

"An' it's a mighty good thing, too. Brothah Gidjon is de nicest house dahky dat I ever hyeahd tell on. Dey jes' de same diffunce 'twixt him an' de othah house-boys as dey is 'tween real quality an' strainers—he got mannahs, but he ain' got aih's."

"Heish, ain't you right!"

"An' while de res' of dem ain' thinkin' 'bout nothin' but dancin' an' ca'in' on, he makin' his peace, callin', an' 'lection sho."

"I tell you, Mam' Henry, dey ain' nothin' like a spichul' named chile."

"Humph! g'long, gal; 'tain't in de name; de biggest devil I evah knowed was named Moses Aaron. 'Tain't in de name, hit's all in de man hisse'f."

But notwithstanding what the gossips said of him, Gideon went on his way, and knew not that the one great power of earth had taken hold of him until they gave the great party down in the quarters, and he saw Martha in all her glory. Then love spoke to him with no uncertain sound.

It was a dancing-party, and because neither he nor Martha dared countenance dancing, they had strolled away together under the pines that lined the white road, whiter now in the soft moonlight. He had never know the pine-cones smell so sweet before in all his life. She had never known just how the moonlight flecked the road before. This was lovers' lane to them. He didn't understand why his heart kept throbbing so furiously, for they were walking slowly, and when a shadow thrown across the road from a by-standing bush frightened her into pressing close up to him, he could not have told why his arm stole round her waist and drew her slim form up to him, or why his lips found hers, as eye looked into eye. For their simple hearts love's mystery is too deep, as it is for wiser ones.

Some few stammering words came to his lips, and she answered

the best she could. Then why did the moonlight flood them so, and why were the heavens so full of stars? Out yonder in the black hedge a mocking-bird was singing, and he was translating—oh, so poorly—the song of their hearts. They forgot the dance, they forgot all but their love.

"An' you won't ma'y nobody else but me, Martha?"

"You know I won't, Gidjon."

"But I mus' wait de yeah out?"

"Yes, an' den don't you think Mas' Stone 'll let us have a little cabin of ouah own jest ouside de quahtahs?"

"Won't it be blessid? Won't it be blessid?" he cried, and then the kindly moon went under a cloud for a moment and came out smiling, for he had peeped through and had seen what passed. Then they walked back hand in hand to the dance along the transfigured road, and they found that the first part of the festivities were over, and all the people had sat down to supper. Everyone laughed when they went in. Martha held back and perspired with embarrassment. But even though he saw some of the older heads whispering in a corner, Gideon was not ashamed. A new light was in his eyes, and a new boldness had come to him. He led Martha up to the grinning group, and said in his best singing voice, "Whut you laughin' at? Yes, I's popped de question, an' she says 'Yes,' an' long 'bout a yeah f'om now you kin all 'spec' a' invitation." This was a formal announcement. A shout arose from the happy-go-lucky people, who sorrowed alike in each other's sorrows, and joyed in each other's joys. They sat down at a table, and their health was drunk in cups of cider and persimmon beer.

Over in the corner Mam' Henry mumbled over her pipe, "Wha'd I tell you? wha'd I tell you?" and Aunt Sophy replied, "Hit's de pa'able of de mo'nin' stahs."

"Don't talk to me 'bout no mo'nin' stahs," the mammy snorted; "Gawd jes' fitted dey voices togeddah, an' den j'ined dey hea'ts. De mo'nin' stahs ain't got nothin' to do wid it."

"Mam' Henry," said Aunt Sophy impressively, "you's a' oldah ooman den I is, an' I ain' sputin' hit; but I say dey done 'filled Scriptor 'bout de mo'nin' stahs; dey's done sung deyse'ves togeddah."

The old woman sniffed.

The next Sunday at meeting some one got the start of Gideon, and began a new hymn. It ran:

"At de ma'ige of de Lamb, oh Lawd,
 God done 'gin His 'sent.
 Dey dressed de Lamb all up in white,
 God done 'gin His 'sent.
 Oh, wasn't dat a happy day,
 Oh, wasn't dat a happy day, Good Lawd,
 Oh, wasn't dat a happy day,
 De ma'ige of de Lamb!"

The Strength of Gideon

The wailing minor of the beginning broke into a joyous chorus at the end, and Gideon wept and laughed in turn, for it was his wedding-song.

The young man had a confidential chat with his master the next morning, and the happy secret was revealed.

"What, you scamp!" said Dudley Stone. "Why, you've got even more sense than I gave you credit for; you've picked out the finest girl on the plantation, and the one best suited to you. You couldn't have done better if the match had been made for you. I reckon this must be one of the marriages that are made in heaven. Marry her, yes, and with a preacher. I don't see why you want to wait a year."

Gideon told him his hopes of a near cabin.

"Better still," his master went on; "with you two joined and up near the big house, I'll feel as safe for the folks as if an army was camped around, and, Gideon, my boy,"—he put his arms on the black man's shoulders,—“if I should slip away some day——”

The slave looked up, startled.

"I mean if I should die—I'm not going to run off—I want you to help your young Mas' Dud look after his mother and Miss Ellen; you hear? Now that's the one promise I ask of you,—come what may, look after the women folks." And the man promised and went away smiling.

His year of engagement, the happiest time of a young man's life, began on golden wings. There came rumors of war, and the wings of the glad-hued year drooped sadly. Sadly they drooped, and seemed to fold, when one day, between the rumors and predictions of strife, Dudley Stone, the old master, slipped quietly away out into the unknown.

There were wife, daughter, son, and faithful slaves about his bed, and they wept for him sincere tears, for he had been a good husband and father and a kind master. But he smiled, and, conscious to the last, whispered to them a cheery good-by. Then, turning to Gideon, who stood there bowed with grief, he raised one weak finger, and his lips made the word "Remember!"

They laid him where they had laid one generation after another of the Stones. It seemed as if a pall of sorrow had fallen upon the whole place. Then, still grieving, they turned their long-distracted attention to the things that had been going on around, and lo! the ominous mutterings were loud, and the cloud of war was black above them.

It was on an April morning when the storm broke, and the plantation, master and man, stood dumb with consternation, for they had hoped, they had believed, it would pass. And now there was the buzz of men who talked in secret corners. There were hurried saddlings and feverish rides to town. Somewhere in the quarters was whispered the

forbidden word "freedom," and it was taken up and dropped breathlessly from the ends of a hundred tongues. Some of the older ones scouted it, but from some who held young children to their breasts there were deep-souled prayers in the dead of night. Over the meetings in the woods or in the log church a strange reserve brooded, and even the prayers took on a guarded tone. Even from the fulness of their hearts, which longed for liberty, no open word that could offend the mistress or the young master went up to the Almighty. He might know their hearts, but no tongue in meeting gave vent to what was in them, and even Gideon sang no more of the gospel army. He was sad because of this new trouble coming hard upon the heels of the old, and Martha was grieved because he was.

At last the trips into town budded into something, and on a memorable evening when the sun looked peacefully through the pines young Dudley Stone rode into the yard dressed in a suit of gray, and on his shoulders were the straps of office. The servants gathered around him with a sort of awe and followed him until he alighted at the porch. Only Mam' Henry, who had been nurse to both him and his sister, dared follow him in. It was a sad scene within, but such a one as any Southern home where there were sons might have shown that awful year. The mother tried to be brave, but her old hands shook, and her tears fell upon her son's brown head, tears of grief at parting, but through which shone the fire of a noble pride. The young Ellen hung about his neck with sobs and caresses.

"Would you have me stay?" he asked her.

"No! no! I know where your place is, but oh, my brother!"

"Ellen," said the mother in a trembling voice, "you are the sister of a soldier now."

The girl dried her tears and drew herself up. "We won't burden your heart, Dudley, with our tears, but we will weight you down with our love and prayers."

It was not so easy with Mam' Henry. Without protest, she took him to her bosom and rocked to and fro, wailing "My baby! my baby!" and the tears that fell from the young man's eyes upon her gray old head cost his manhood nothing.

Gideon was behind the door when his master called him. His sleeve was travelling down from his eyes as he emerged.

"Gideon," said his master, pointing to his uniform, "you know what this means?"

"Yes, suh."

"I wish I could take you along with me. But——"

"Mas' Dud," Gideon threw out his arms in supplication.

"You remember father's charge to you, take care of the women folks." He took the servant's hand, and, black man and white, they

looked into each other's eyes, and the compact was made. Then Gideon gulped and said "Yes, suh" again.

Another boy held the master's horse and rode away behind him when he vaulted into the saddle, and the man of battle-song and warrior name went back to mind the women-folks.

Then began the disintegration of the plantation's population. First Yellow Bob slipped away, and no one pursued him. A few blamed him, but they soon followed as the year rolled away. More were missing every time a Union camp lay near, and great tales were told of the chances for young negroes who would go as body-servants to the Yankee officers. Gideon heard all and was silent.

Then as the time of his marriage drew near he felt a greater strength, for there was one who would be with him to help him keep his promise and his faith.

The spirit of freedom had grown strong in Martha as the days passed, and when her lover went to see her she had strange things to say. Was he going to stay? Was he going to be a slave when freedom and a livelihood lay right within his grasp? Would he keep her a slave? Yes, he would do it all—all.

She asked him to wait.

Another year began, and one day they brought Dudley Stone home to lay beside his father. Then most of the remaining negroes went. There was no master now. The two bereaved women wept, and Gideon forgot that he wore the garb of manhood and wept with them.

Martha came to him.

"Gidjon," she said, "I's waited a long while now. Mos' eve'y body else is gone. Ain't you goin'?"

"No."

"But, Gidjon, I wants to be free. I know how good dey've been to us; but, oh, I wants to own myse'f. They're talkin' 'bout settin' us free every hour."

"I can wait."

"They's a camp right near here."

"I promised."

"The of'cers wants body-servants, Gidjon——"

"Go, Martha, if you want to, but I stay."

She went away from him, but she or some one else got word to young Captain Jack Griswold of the near camp that there was an excellent servant on the plantation who only needed a little persuading, and he came up to see him.

"Look here," he said, "I want a body-servant. I'll give you ten dollars a month."

"I've got to stay here."

"But, you fool, what have you to gain by staying here?"

"I'm goin' to stay."

"Why, you'll be free in a little while, anyway."

"All right."

"Of all fools," said the Captain. "I'll give you fifteen dollars."

"I do' want it."

"Well, your girl's going, anyway. I don't blame her for leaving such a fool as you are."

Gideon turned and looked at him.

"The camp is going to be moved up on this plantation, and there will be a requisition for this house for officers' quarters, and I'll see you again," and Captain Griswold went his way.

Martha going! Martha going! Gideon could not believe it. He would not. He saw her, and she confirmed it. She was going as an aid to the nurses. He gasped, and went back to mind the women folks.

They did move the camp up nearer, and Captain Griswold came to see Gideon again, but he could get no word from him, save "I'm goin' to stay," and he went away in disgust, entirely unable to understand such obstinacy, as he called it.

But the slave had his moments alone, when the agony tore at his breast and rended him. Should he stay? The others were going. He would soon be free. Every one had said so, even his mistress one day. Then Martha was going. "Martha! Martha!" his heart called.

The day came when the soldiers were to leave, and he went out sadly to watch them go. All the plantation, that had been white with tents, was dark again, and everywhere were moving, blue-coated figures.

Once more his tempter came to him. "I'll make it twenty dollars," he said, but Gideon shook his head. Then they started. The drums tapped. Away they went, the flag kissing the breeze. Martha stole up to say good-by to him. Her eyes were overflowing, and she clung to him.

"Come, Gidjon," she plead, "fu' my sake. Oh, my God, won't you come with us—it's freedom." He kissed her, but shook his head.

"Hunt me up when you do come," she said, crying bitterly, "fu' I do love you, Gidjon, but I must go. Out yonder is freedom," and she was gone with them.

He drew out a pace after the troops, and then, turning, looked back at the house. He went a step farther, and then a woman's gentle voice called him, "Gideon!" He stopped. He crushed his cap in his hands, and the tears came into his eyes. Then he answered, "Yes, Mis' Ellen, I's a-comin'."

He stood and watched the dusty column until the last blue leg swung out of sight and over the gray hills the last drum-tap died away, and then turned and retraced his steps towards the house.

Gideon had mightily triumphed.

THE COMMON INSECTS OF AUTUMN

BY BELLE S. CRAGIN

Author of "Our Insect Friends and Foes."

TO one who listens through wakeful hours of an autumn night to the myriad insect sounds of meadow and woodland, or who learns that the insect world comprises four-fifths of the animal kingdom, and that the two hundred thousand named species are but a fraction of the whole, it may seem hopeless to attempt, in the limits of a magazine article, any satisfactory account of our common autumn insects. It must be remembered, however, that comparatively few insects belong distinctively to the fall. The vast majority live their busy little lives in spring and summer, and disappear from our circle of acquaintances by the end of August. Most of those seen later are the survivors, or possibly a late brood, or, in a few cases, species which do not appear as adults until the advent of cool weather. All through the fall the number of insects is lessening, and those which remain are busy hunting up winter quarters for themselves, or laying eggs and storing provision for their unborn children.

Of course, insects exist always in some form, as egg, larva, pupa, or imago. The imago lays the egg, the egg hatches and produces the larva, the larva eats and grows, and then goes to sleep as a pupa, and the pupa, after varying periods of time, wakes up as the imago, or perfect insect. The imago of most species is the most familiar form, and stands for the insect in the popular mind.

Let us begin with our old acquaintance, the Katydid. Hundreds of people have heard the little creature's rasping song where one has seen the singer. It is a slender-bodied insect, with long, waving antennæ, slim legs, full, round eyes, and two pairs of beautiful, finely veined wings. The whole insect is a delicate light green, and it takes sharp eyes to detect a Katydid on the twig of a bush or tree. The front wings are thick and opaque, and are simply covers for the hind pair, which are transparent and green-veined, and when not in use are folded under the others. The Katydid is said to live in tree-tops, but I have found it by day on bushes within easy reach. The song is produced by the rasping of the wing-covers. The male asserts loudly that Katy did or didn't, and the female replies in the same tone, but before the listener can tell who has the best of the argument the neighbors take it up, till the domestic controversy becomes an antiphonal chorus, and the air is filled with the jangle of the never-ended dispute. It may be noted,

however, that the male talks the most, the female's reply being sharp but short.

When the Katydid is ready to lay her eggs, she selects a small twig, which she gnaws and chews till the bark is well roughened; then she lays perhaps twenty long, slate-colored eggs in overlapping rows. Later she lays another batch elsewhere, and so on till frost. The eggs hatch in May, and the inch-long baby Katydid begins at once to take possession of himself. Half an hour after he is born he is hopping and eating as if he had always known how. Five times before he reaches maturity he acquires a new skin and eats the old one. There are several species of Katydids, among them the Broad-Winged, of the Central and Eastern States, and the Angular-Winged, of the West and Southwest.

Our ancient foe, the Mosquito, deserves mention as a fall insect, for he rarely leaves us until frost ends his career. The adult Mosquito requires no description, but the larvæ, known as wigglers, have some curious characteristics. Mosquito eggs are laid on end, side by side, in a raft-like cluster which floats on the water. In a few days the larvæ crawl out at the lower end, and swim about, feeding on decaying matter. Their breathing-tube is near the tail, and they always rest at the surface with the abdomen raised so as to bring this tube above water. A fringe of flat hairs at the tip serves the double purpose of keeping them afloat and of closing the breathing-tube when they dive. They soon change to pupæ, and in a few days more the pupa-skin splits down the back, the winged Mosquito crawls out very damp and unsteady, and floats around till dry, using his old skin as a raft. This is the most perilous time in his life-history, for a breath or a ripple will sink the raft and drown the navigator; but if all goes well he soon flies away, ready for business. For this reason Mosquitoes never breed in running water. On the other hand, water does not seem essential to their existence, for some species abound on high, dry western plains, miles from damp ground or standing water. It is worthy of mention that the female Mosquitoes do the singing and biting; the males are silent and inoffensive, rarely seen about dwellings. It will be disheartening to most readers to learn that there are one hundred and fifty species of Mosquitoes known.

The Crane-Flies are mosquito-like insects which appear at twilight and dance up and down in the air in swarms,—a habit shared by some other flies. There are twelve hundred species of Crane-Flies, some very tiny, but our common species has a slim body rather larger than a mosquito, narrow wings, and six very long, awkward, weak legs, which are forever in the way and are practically useless for walking. Neither can the insect fly well, as may be seen by observing it in the open fields which it frequents. It flies slowly, with sprawling legs, gradually settling till it becomes entangled in grass or bushes; then it struggles out,

flies a little farther, and sinks into another entanglement, repeating the performance indefinitely. It often leaves a leg behind it, which from an observer's stand-point is a benefit, and even the insect appears indifferent to its loss. The Crane-Fly has in place of hind wings two short, thread-like organs with a tiny knob at the end called halteres, but their use is not understood.

Dragon-Flies, though creatures of the sunshine, abundant in mid-summer, may be seen through the early fall, darting about fields and water-sides, their gauzy wings and brilliant eyes shining with metallic lustre. They are charged with various wicked deeds of which they are entirely innocent, living on insects alone and having neither power nor wish to harm us. The adult Dragon-Fly is characterized by enormous eyes, strong, swift flight, and an insatiable appetite: He lives in the air, alighting at times but never walking. The wings are marked by a kind of stiff joint at the front edge. The large, prominent eyes are composed of many facets, and it is a lucky insect that escapes them. The female drops her greenish-yellow eggs as she darts over the water, or deposits them on leaves or in gashes cut in stems of submerged plants. The larvæ live in the water, and are as wide-awake and greedy as the parents and much uglier. They have immense lips, which cover the face like a mask and give the creature a fairly respectable look; but let an insect come within reach, and the lower lip, armed with two hooks, darts out and grabs the victim without ceremony. The larva breathes and swims by a combination method. It takes water into a passage at the end of the abdomen, extracts the air by means of small air-tubes, then contracts the passage and expels the water so violently that the force pushes him ahead, and so he pumps himself along, two or three inches at a time. There are many species of Dragon-Flies, some large and very active, carrying the wings horizontally whether in rest or flight,—others smaller, quieter, and laying the wings together along the back when resting. The latter are called Damsel-Flies, alluding to their lady-like manners.

The curious insects called Walking-Sticks may be found until late fall, resting on green or brown twigs which their slender bodies exactly resemble, with two of their six long legs stretched straight out in front. They are slow, awkward walkers, however, notwithstanding the fact that they have no wings and must walk whenever they move about. They feed on leaves, chiefly of oak-trees. A newly born Walking-Stick is like its parents in form but smaller in size, and as it grows its color changes from green to gray or brown. The female lays eggs at intervals through the season, and seems to consider her maternal obligation discharged when she drops them from any place where she happens to be, and lets them reach the ground as they may. The eggs are black, tough, and seed-like, and under favorable circumstances you can hear them

pattering like tiny raindrops on the foliage. Tropical Walking-Sticks have wings veined like leaves.

The cheerful Cricket bestows his presence upon us until cold weather ends his life or drives him into some warm crevice to spend the winter. Little black fellows of all sizes frequent our houses and scatter before our feet in our out-door walks. They love heat, and are common under haystacks and decaying vegetation, in barns and about kitchens. Bakers are usually over-supplied with them. Most Crickets feed on vegetable food. They are also excessively fond of moisture, and often eat holes in damp woollen clothes. They live in crevices, each by himself, chirping and eating mostly at night. The male Cricket has on his wing-covers complicated ridges and rasps by which he gives his call. Crickets constitute a large proportion of the autumnal night orchestra, but the males make all the noise,—the females are silent. Crickets' eggs are laid in autumn in loose, warm soil, and left to take care of themselves.

Bumble-Bees, familiar, hairy, black and yellow blunderers, are very conspicuous and numerous in the fall, gathering honey and storing it in the irregular, wax-and-silk cells which have already served their purpose as cocoons for the young bees. This may explain the characteristic flavor of bumble-bee honey. With cold weather all the bees die except the queens, most of whom survive the winter and start new colonies in the spring, utilizing the deserted nest of a ground-bird or field-mouse. One Bumble-Bee queen was known to use a robin's nest high up in a porch.

The little Leaf-Cutter, or Upholsterer-Bee, is another busy bee of autumn. She makes a tunnel in wood with a rounded cell at the bottom, and lines this cell with pieces of leaves cut out neatly with her tiny jaws. An egg is deposited, a paste of pollen and nectar supplied for food, and the cell is closed with a plug of round pieces forced into the opening. The little architect chooses her home discreetly,—you will not often find it.

Certain wasps continue their work until benumbed by cold. The White-Faced Hornet, our largest species, has a short body and wings folded in rest. It builds on trees a series of combs, one above another, enclosed in a paper covering, sometimes of immense size. Another species, not a hornet, makes a single layer of comb without covering, and attaches it to bushes or by a stiff stem to the lower side of overhanging surfaces. It is a long-bodied black wasp with a yellow-ringed abdomen. Its wings fold at rest, like those of all true wasps. It bears the cold as long as it can, and then seeks shelter, often in houses, from which it emerges early in spring and crawls, half-torpid, over floors and window-sills.

Many bugs are active in the fall, especially aquatic bugs, perhaps

because the water resists the changing temperature longer than the land. The Water-Boatmen, or Back-Swimmers, are so called because they invariably swim on their backs. Flying is also one of their accomplishments. They have large, prominent eyes, long, silk-fringed hind legs, and a boat-shaped body of an ivory color with various yellow, brown, or black marks. They also possess a short, strong beak which will linger long in your memory if you handle the bug carelessly. He is an intensely active fellow, very greedy, devouring great numbers of aquatic insects found in the muddy pools which he frequents.

Another active bug is the Water-Strider, found in small companies in the quieter portions of running water, striding about on the surface with long, slender, hairy hind legs. The old Striders are dark and wrinkled, the young ones lighter and smoother. As the cold increases they creep under rubbish or into holes in the banks, coming out in the spring as alert as ever.

Among the land-bugs common in autumn is the Long-Legged Emesa, a small insect not unlike the Walking-Stick, but smaller and slenderer, with very long, spidery legs, by which it is often seen swinging from the roofs of out-buildings. Its dried body is common on the inside of shed and barn windows. Its color is reddish-brown marked with paler brown and ivory. It frequents trees and bushes, grasping its prey with its fore-legs, which have spines to hold the victim. It is known by many different names.

Ambush-Bugs and Damsel-Bugs are found on golden-rod and other fall flowers. The Ambush-Bug is greenish-yellow, banded with black across the broad back, and black-spotted on head and body. Later in the season the green tinge fades. The bug hides among the blossoms, and sucks the juices of bees or other insects that stray within reach of its strong, armed fore-legs.

The Blonde Damsel-Bug has an oblong body, narrow in front, rounded and broadened behind, pale yellow with dark markings, and armed with a slender beak by which it preys upon small insects. The Black Damsel-Bug is similar except for color, being glossy black with yellow on legs and edges of abdomen.

The golden-rod, on account of its abundant pollen, swarms with insects,—soft-bodied, narrow-necked, long-legged Blister-Beetles, whose family includes our friend, the Spanish-Fly; Soldier-Beetles, day-flying members of the Fire-Fly family, characterized by a yellow color, a long black spot on each wing-cover, and two fleshy filaments attached to the mouth-parts; the Locust-Borer, a yellow-banded black beetle, whose larvæ greatly injure locust-trees by boring into the wood; besides many bees and other insects seeking pollen or prey.

On pine-trees and others you will find the Banded Robber, a good sized, waxy-yellow bug, easily known by conspicuous dark bands on legs

and antennæ, and by a vicious beak which justifies his membership with the Assassin-Bugs. To the same family belongs the Wheel-Bug, an immense, hairy, gray fellow, with a cog-wheel mark on his back, and a formidable beak with which he attacks anybody who offends him.

In pleasing contrast to the foregoing are the Lady-Birds, dainty little beetles, with smooth hemispherical bodies of various colors and markings. They are all harmless, and many helpful. The Two-Spotted is very common on white-birch trees in the autumn, devouring plant-lice, which congregate there. It is reddish-yellow, with a black spot on the back and on each wing-cover. Lady-Birds are desirable tenants on house-plants, and will enjoy your hospitality all winter, sleeping in crevices; but be sure, when they crawl out in spring, that you do not mistake them for carpet-beetles, and kill them.

Many other bugs and beetles, unnumbered flies, and various insects of less well-known families are common throughout the autumn. Butterflies in general live their brief lives in summer sunshine, lay their eggs, and die before the end of August, but some of the hardier species survive till frost, some second broods appear in September, and others even pass the winter in sheltered places. To the second class belongs the Red Admiral, a purple-black butterfly, its notched fore wings bearing a central orange band and conspicuous white spots near the tip, its hind wings having a black-spotted orange border.

The Mourning-Cloak is also two-brooded. The wings have wavy edges with several prominent points. The color is purple-brown, with a brown and yellow border, and a row of blue spots inside the border.

The Painted Beauty and the Cosmopolitan resemble each other strongly. They are dark brown, irregularly marked with orange, and spotted with white near the wing-apex. The Cosmopolitan has less orange than the Painted Beauty, and more "eye-spots" on the under surface of the hind wings.

Of moths a considerable number are common to the autumn, among them some of the Hawk-Moths, named for their strong, swift flight,—large, beautiful moths with tapering bodies, flying usually in the twilight, poising themselves over flowers on vibrating wings, like humming-birds; certain numbers of the Giant Silk-Worm family, stout, hairy, handsome moths, with sunken heads, broad, strong wings, and feathery antennæ,—one species of which, the light-green, swallow-tailed Luna Moth, is an especial favorite; and a goodly number of smaller moths, many of them Geometers, so-called from the measuring or looping habit of the larvæ. A common Geometer is the Chain-Dotted, white, with dots and broken lines of black. The Evergreen Cleora, found about evergreens, is white or dusky, with a scalloped black line on the hind wings and two on the fore wings. The Lime-Tree Winter-Moth has wingless females and buff-winged males. The Fall Canker-Worm, with

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whose devastating work on fruit- and shade-trees we are sadly familiar, also has wingless, grub-like females and winged males of dull colors.

All through the autumn you may collect larvæ of various insects, notably the caterpillars of certain butterflies and moths, and cocoons or pupæ of others. Mud and rubbish of ponds, streams, gardens, and roadsides; leaves gathered in hollows or at the edge of woodland; tufts of coarse grass growing on sandy soil; toadstools and other fungi; decaying vegetable and animal matter;—all yield their quota of insects. Never, until frost holds the earth in a rigid and permanent embrace, is the collector's occupation gone, and even then specimens may often be found in places where they have retired to hibernate. To the watchful eye and the ready hand opportunity is seldom lacking.



THE BIGGEST LITTLE FIGHT IN NAVAL HISTORY

BY GEORGE GIBBS

Frontispiece by the Author.

IT should have been renown enough for one man to have performed what Lord Nelson was pleased to call "the most daring act of any age." But the capture of the Philadelphia only whetted Decatur's appetite for further encounters. He was impetuous, bold even to rashness, and so dashing that to his men he was irresistible. But behind it all, a thing rare in a man of his peculiar calibre, there was the ability to consider judiciously and to plan carefully, as well as to execute daringly. His fierce temper led him into many difficulties; but there was no cruelty behind it, and the men who served with him, while they feared him, would have followed him into the jaws of death, for they loved him as they loved no officer in the American service. Once while the frigate Essex, Captain Bainbridge, lay in the harbor at Barcelona, the officers of the American vessel suffered many petty indignities at the instance of the officers of the Spanish guard-ship. Having himself been subjected to a slight from the Spanish commander, Lieutenant Decatur took the bull by the horns. He bade his coxswain pull to the gangway of the Spaniard and went boldly aboard. His lips were set, for he had resolved upon his own responsibility to make an immediate precedent which would serve for all time. The Spanish commander, most fortunately, was absent. But Decatur, none the less, strode aft past the sentry to the gangway and, lifting his great voice so that it resounded from truck to keelson, shouted:

"Tell your Commandante that Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, of the Essex, declares him to be a scoundrelly coward, and if Lieutenant De-

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catgur meets him ashore he will cut his ears off." So among the men of the squadron Decatur came to be known as a man who brooked nothing and dared everything.

But when the crusty Preble took command in the Mediterranean he was not over-impressed with the under-officers of his command. None of the lieutenants was over twenty-four and none of those higher in authority had turned thirty. Decatur and Somers were twenty-five. Charles Stewart was only twenty-six, and Bainbridge the younger, Morris, and Macdonough were barely out of their teens. It was not the custom of the Commander-in-Chief to mince his words. So, sparing himself the delicacy of secluding himself behind the saving bulkheads of the after-cabin, he swore right roundly at his home government for sending him what he was pleased to call "a parcel of d— school-boys." He was a martinet of the old style, and believed in the school of the fo'c's'le, and not in young gentlemen whose friends at home sent them in by the ports of the after-cabin. He held the youngsters aloof, and not until he had tried them in every conceivable fashion would he admit them to his councils. A year had passed, and Decatur, Morris, Bainbridge, Macdonough, and Somers had helped to add glorious pages to naval history before the old man, with a smile, consented to say to Colonel Lear, the consul:

"Well, after all, Colonel, they are very good school-boys!"

Although Decatur's success in the destruction of the Philadelphia had removed a dangerous auxiliary battery from the harbor of Tripoli, the Bashaw was far from overawed and, with the officers and crew of the Philadelphia as hostages, declined to consider any terms offered by the Americans. And so it was resolved by Commodore Preble to make an attempt upon the Tripolitan batteries and fleet. The Americans had the Constitution, "Old Ironsides," Commodore Preble, and six brigs and schooners mounting twelve and sixteen guns each. Preble had also succeeded in borrowing from "the most gracious King of the Sicilies," who was then at war with the Bashaw, two bomb-vessels and six single gun-boats—quite a formidable little force of a hundred and thirty-four guns and about a thousand men.

It was not until the morning of August 3, 1804, that the weather, which had been very stormy, moderated sufficiently to allow the squadron to approach the African coast. The gun-boats were unwieldy craft, flat-bottomed and, as the sea made clean breeches over them, were a dozen times in danger of sinking. But by ten o'clock the sky to the southward had lightened and the heavy storm-clouds were blowing away overhead to the westward. "Old Ironsides" shook the reefs out of her topsails and, spreading her topgallant sails, beat up for the entrance of the harbor of Tripoli with two of the gun-boats in tow. Her tall spars, seeming almost to pierce the low-rolling clouds, towered far

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above the little sticks of the Siren and Nautilus, which bore down directly in her wake. The sea had lashed out its fury, and before the little fleet had reached the reef the gray had turned to green, and here and there a line of amber showed where the mid-day sun was stealing through.

Stephen Decatur, on gun-boat No. 4, had been given command of the left division of three gun-boats. Casting off the tow-lines from his larger consorts, he got under weigh and bore down for a rift between the reefs at the eastern entrance to the harbor, where the Tripolitan fleet, cleared for action, lay awaiting him. The wind was on his bow, and he was obliged to hold a course close to the wind in order to weather the point.

The gun-boat lumbered uncertainly in the cross-sea, for she had no longer the steady drag of the Constitution's hawser to steady her. The seas came up under her flat bottom and seemed to toss rather than swing her into the hollows. She was at best an unsteady gun platform, and nice sail-trimming was an impossibility. But they got out their sweeps, and that steadied her somewhat. Great volumes of spray flew up over the weather bow as she soused her blunt nose into it, and the fair breeze sent it shimmering down to leeward.

Decatur stood aft by the helmsman, watching the quivering leeches and keeping her well up into the wind. Beside him stood his midshipmen, Thomas Macdonough—afterwards to win a great victory of his own—and Joseph Thorn. Both of them had smelt powder before, and Macdonough had been one of the first on the deck of the ill-fated Philadelphia. This was to be a different sort of a fight from any they had seen. It was to be man to man, where good play of cutlass and pike and youth and American grit might mean victory. Defeat meant annihilation. But youth is good at a game of life and death, and as they looked at Decatur there was never a moment's fear of the result. They leaned against the rail to leeward, looking past the foam-boiling on the point to the spars of the African gun-boats, and their eyes were alight with eagerness for battle.

The men were bending steadily to their sweeps. Most of them were stripped to the waist, and Decatur looked along the line of sinewy arms and chests with a glow of pride and confidence. There was no wavering anywhere in the row of glistening faces. But they all knew the kind of pirates they were going to meet,—reckless, treacherous devils, who loved blood as they loved Allah, the best hand-to-hand fighters in the Mediterranean.

The ring of the cutlasses, loose-settled in their hangers, against the butts of the boarding-pistols was clear above the sound of the row-locks and the rush of the waters, while forward the catch of a song went up, and they bent to their work the more merrily.

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As they came under the lee of the Tripolitan shore and the sea went down, Decatur ordered the long iron six-pounder cast loose. They had provided solid shot for long range at the batteries, and these were now brought up and put conveniently on the fo'c's'le. But for the attack upon the vessels of the fleet they loaded first with a bag of a thousand musket-balls. At point-blank range Decatur judged that this would do tremendous execution among the close-ranked mass of Tripolitans on the foreign vessels. His idea was not to respond to the fire of the enemy, which would soon begin, until close aboard, and then to go over the rail before they could recover from their confusion. He felt that if they didn't make a wreck of him and batter up his sweeps he could get alongside; and once alongside he knew that his men would give a good account of themselves.

But as they came up towards the point the wind shifted and the head of the gun-boat payed off. Even with their work at the sweeps he now knew it would be no easy matter for all the Americans to weather the point, for two of them were well down to leeward. But his brother, James Decatur, in gun-boat No. 2, and Sailing-Master John Trippe, in gun-boat No. 6, had kept well up to windward, and so he felt that he should be able to count at least on these two. As they reached the line of breakers one of the gun-boats to leeward under Richard Somers was obliged to go about, and in a moment the two others followed. Then the young commanders of the windward gun-boats knew that if the attack was to be made, they alone would have the glory of the first onslaught.

What Decatur feared most was that Preble on the Constitution would see how terribly they were overmatched and signal the recall. But as they reached the point Decatur resolutely turned his back to the flag-ship and, putting his helm up, set the nose of his gun-boat boldly into the swash of the entrance, heading for the gray line of vessels, three times his number, which hauled up their anchors and came down, gallantly enough, to meet him.

There was very little sound upon the gun-boat now. The wind being favorable, the Americans shipped their sweeps and sat watching the largest of the Tripolitan vessels, which was bearing down upon them rapidly. They saw a puff of white smoke from her fo'c's'le and heard the whistle of a shot, which, passing wide, ricocheted just abeam and buried itself beyond. Thorn stood forward waiting for the order to fire his long gun. But Decatur gave no sign. He stood watching the lift of the foresail, carefully noting the distance between the two vessels. Trippe and James Decatur had each picked out an adversary and were bearing down as silently as he, in spite of the cannonade which now came from both the vessels and batteries of the Turks. The shots were splashing all around him, but nothing had been carried away, and the American Jackies jeered cheerfully at the wretched marksmanship. As

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the Tripolitans came nearer the Americans could see the black mass of men along the rails and caught the glimmer of the yataghans. Then Decatur ordered his own men to seize their pikes and draw their pistols and cutlasses.

At the word from Decatur, Thorn began training the fo'c's'le gun, which, in the steadier sea, would have a deadly effect. The distance was a matter of yards now, and a shot came ploughing alongside that threw spray all along the rail and nearly doused the match of the gunner on the fo'c's'le. But not until he could see the whites of the eyes of his adversaries did Decatur give the order to fire. As the big gun was discharged point-blank into the thick of the crowded figures, Decatur shifted his helm quickly and lay aboard the Tripolitan. So tremendous had been the execution of the musket-balls, and so quickly had the manœuvre been executed, that almost before the Tripolitans were aware of it the Americans were upon them. The few shots from the Turkish small arms had gone wild, but a fierce struggle ensued before the Americans reached the deck. At last Decatur, followed by Thorn, Macdonough, and twenty-two seamen, gained the fo'c's'le, and the Tripolitans retreated aft.

The Tripolitan boat was divided in the middle by an open hatchway, and for a moment the opposing forces stopped to catch their breath, glaring at one another across the opening. Decatur did not pause long. Giving them a volley of pistol-bullets at close range, he dashed furiously down one gangway while Macdonough and Thorn went down the other, and with a cheer cut down the remaining Turks or drove them overboard. A half-dozen went down a forward hatch, and these were made prisoners.

It was a short fight with an inconsiderable loss to Decatur, but the Tripolitan dead were strewn all over the decks, and the Turkish captain was pierced by fourteen bullets. The Tripolitan flag was hauled down, and taking his prize in tow Decatur put his men at the sweeps again to move farther out of the reach of the batteries.

By this time James Decatur and John Trippe had got into the thick of it. Following Stephen Decatur's example, they dashed boldly at the larger of the Bashaw's vessels and, reserving their fire for close range, lay two of them aboard. John Trippe, Midshipman Henley, and nine seamen had gained the deck of their adversary when the vessels drifted apart and they were left alone on the deck of the enemy. But Trippe was the man for the emergency. So rapidly did they charge the Turks that their very audacity gave them the advantage, and Trippe finally succeeded in killing the Tripolitan commander by running him through with a boarding-pike. They fought with the energy of despair, and although wounded and bleeding from a dozen sabre-cuts, struggled on until their gun-boat got alongside and they were rescued by their comrades.

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But the story of the treachery of the Turkish captain and Stephen Decatur's revenge for the death of his brother makes even the wonderful defensive battle of Trippe seem small by comparison.

James Decatur, having got well up with one of the largest of the Tripolitan vessels, delivered so quick and telling a fire with his long gun and musketry that the enemy immediately struck his colors. He hauled alongside and clambered up and over the side of the gun-boat to take possession of her personally. As his head came up above the rail his men saw the Turkish commander rush forward and aim his boarding-pistol at the defenceless American. The bullet struck him fairly in the forehead, and Decatur, with barely a sound, sank back into his boat.

In their horror at the treachery of the Tripolitan the Americans allowed the boat to sheer off, and the Turk, getting out his sweeps, was soon speeding away towards the protection of the batteries.

Stephen Decatur, towing his prize to safety, had noted the gallant attack and had seen the striking of the Turkish colors. But not until an American boat darted alongside of him did he hear the news of the treacherous manner of his brother's death. The shock of the information for the moment appalled him, but in the place of grief there arose so fierce a rage at the dastardly act that for a moment he was stricken dumb and senseless. His men sprang quickly when at last he thundered out his orders. Deftly casting off the towline of the prize, they hoisted all sail and jumped to their sweeps as though their lives depended on it. Macdonough's gun-crew were loading with solid shot this time, and as soon as they got the range a ball went screaming down towards the fleeing Tripolitan. The men at the sweeps needed little encouragement. They had heard the news, and they loved James Decatur as they worshipped his brother, who stood aft, his lips compressed, anxiously watching the chase. The water boiled under the oar-blades as the clumsy hulk seemed to spring from one wave-crest to another. Again the long gun spoke, and the canister struck the water all about the Turkish vessel. The Tripolitans seemed disorganized, for their oars no longer moved together and the blades were splashing wildly. Another solid shot went flying, and Decatur smiled as he saw the spray fly up under the enemy's counter. There would be no mercy for the Tripolitans that day! Nearer and nearer they came, until the Turks, seeing that further attempts at flight were useless, dropped their sweeps and prepared to receive the Americans. They shifted their helm so that their gun could bear, and the shot that followed tore a great rent in Decatur's foresail. But the Americans heeded it little more than if it had been a puff of wind, and, pausing only to deliver another deadly discharge of the musket-balls at point-blank range, Decatur swung in alongside under the cover of the smoke.

As the vessels grated together Decatur jumped for the Tripolitan

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rigging and, followed by his men, quickly gained the deck. Two Turks rushed at Decatur, aiming vicious blows with their cimeters, but he parried them skilfully with his pike, looking around him fiercely the while for the Captain. As he thought of his brother dying or dead, he swore that no American should engage the Turkish commander but himself. He had not long to wait. They espied each other at about the same moment and, brushing the intervening weapons aside, dashed forward furiously.

Decatur was tall and as active as a cat. His muscles were like steel, and his rage seemed to give him the strength of a dozen. But the Mussulman was a giant, the biggest man in the Tripolitan fleet, and a very demon in power and viciousness. So strong was he, that as Decatur lunged at him with his boarding-pike he succeeded in wrenching it from the hand of the American, and so wonderfully quick that Decatur had hardly time to raise his cutlass to parry the return. He barely caught it, but in doing so his weapon broke off short at the hilt. The next lunge he partially warded by stepping to one side, but the pike of the Mussulman in passing cut an ugly wound in his arm and chest. Entirely defenceless, he now knew that his only chance was at close quarters, so he sprang in below the guard of the Turk and seized him around the waist, hoping to trip and stun him. But the Tripolitan tore his arms away as though he had been a stripling and, seizing him by the throat, bore him by sheer weight to the deck, trying the while to draw a yataghan. The American crew, seeing things going badly with their young Captain, fought in furiously, and in a moment the mass of American and Tripolitans were fighting in one desperate, struggling, smothering heap above the prostrate bodies of their Captains, neither of whom could succeed in drawing a weapon. The Turk was the first to get his dagger loose, but the American's deathlike grasp held his wrist like a vise and kept him from striking the blow. Decatur saw another Turk just above him raise his yataghan high above his head and he felt that he was lost. But at this moment a sailor named Reuben James, who loved Decatur as though he were a brother, closed in quickly and caught on his own head the blow intended for Decatur. Both his arms had been disabled, but he asked nothing better than to lay down his life for his Captain.

In the meanwhile, without relinquishing his grip upon the Turk, Decatur succeeded in drawing a pistol from the breast of his shirt, and pressing the muzzle near the heart of the Tripolitan fired. As the muscles of his adversary relaxed, the American managed to get upon one knee and so to his feet, stunned and bleeding, but still unsubdued. The Tripolitans, disheartened by the loss of their leader, broke ground before the force of the next attack and fled overboard or were cut down where they stood.

The death of James Decatur was avenged.

The other Tripolitan gun-boats had scurried back to safety, so Decatur with his two prizes made his way out towards the flag-ship unmolested. His victory had cost him dearly. There was not a man who had not two or three wounds from the cimeters, and some of them had cuts all over the body. The decks were like a slaughter-pen and the scuppers were running blood. But the bodies of the Tripolitans were ruthlessly cast overboard to the sharks, and by the time they had reached the Constitution the decks had been scrubbed down, and the wounded had been bandaged and roughly cared for by those of their comrades who had fared less badly.

Decatur, by virtue of his exploit in destroying the Philadelphia, already a post captain at the age of twenty-five, could expect no further immediate honors at the hands of the government, but then, as ever afterwards, he craved nothing but a staunch ship and a gallant crew. The service he could do his country was its own reward.

"AR' YE WOTH IT?"*

BY CY WARMAN

Author of "The Story of the Railroad," "The Express Messenger," etc.

OLD Mr. B. owned a big farm out in Michigan. He had heaps of horses, sheep, cattle, and hogs, and a boy—a dreamy, blue-eyed boy, whom he called Steve. Steve was a good boy, as boys go, but he never seemed to fit in on the farm. He never complained, but appeared dissatisfied. He was forever looking down the dusty road that ran away to the town, where the train stopped, picked people up, and carried them away into the wide, interesting world. When he started across the field again he would hold the plough with one hand, walk side-wise, and look back over his shoulder.

Finally old Mr. B. took the plough from Steve and told him to go 'way for a spell, and see if he didn't want to get back worse 'an he ever wanted to get away.

Steve went. He wandered into the far West and began "railroad-ing" where the setting sun tints the snowy summit of the Sangre de Cristo Range. He began doing whatever he found to do—pushing a truck or a lead-pencil—and in a little while they began to promote him. Every time his pay was increased he thought of the old folks, and planned a visit back to the farm. He would write home and tell them about his promotion, but it was not a nice thing to leave a new job, and

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by the time he had mastered it they would promote him again. So, from year to year, as his pay and importance to the company increased, he found it harder and harder to get away.

When he found the word "General" printed after his name, and looked at the check that the company sent him at the end of each month, he said "I'll have to hustle to earn all this money," and the trip back to the scenes of his boyhood's happy home down on the farm was put aside again.

But there came a time when young Mr. B. needed rest. The general manager suggested a vacation, but Mr. B. said he could not spare the time.

"Take thirty days," said the manager, "or I'll give you sixty," and Steve started for Michigan.

One warm midsummer day Steve found himself seated under the old Baldwin apple-tree, with the half hull of a red-hearted watermelon in his lap. Old Mr. B., busy with the other half, paused now and then to ask Steve about his new job, how many cigars he smoked in a day, what they cost, and what he paid for his fine clothes. Presently he wanted to know what they called his boy on the road—conductor, brakeman, or what?

"They call me the general freight agent, father," said Steve.

"That's a mighty big name, Steve."

"Yes, father; it's rather a big job, too, for me."

"But ye don't do it all, Steve. Ye must have hands to help you load and unload?"

"Oh, yes, I have a lot of help."

"And the company pays 'em all?"

"Yes."

"How much do they pay you, Steve—two dollars a day?"

Steve almost strangled on a piece of core, and the old gentleman saw that he had guessed too low.

"Three," he ventured.

"More than that, father."

"Ye don't mean to say they pay ye as much as fi-e-v-e?"

"Yes, father; more than twenty-five."

The old man let the empty hull fall between his knees, stared at his boy, and whistled.

"Say, Steve," he asked earnestly, "ar' ye woth it?"

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Sarah Bernhardt. By Jules Huret. Illustrated.

It seems particularly fitting that this book should appear in these days, when the greatest puzzle of modern times has triumphed over the difficulties incident to translation and has given a successful interpretation of Hamlet, the *crux* of psychologic-literary criticism. Hamlet has been attempted in French by other actors,—by Rouvière, by Rossi, by Salvini, by Mounet-Sully; but none of these can compare with the rendition of the divine Sarah, nor could one of them create such an interest in the play that it would sell in pamphlet form on the streets.—Such was the triumph of Sarah. M. Huret's book—Lippincott—beside being a complete biographical sketch, is of service in enabling us to formulate our own opinion concerning this marvellous woman, to-day, at fifty-five years of age, the *doyenne* of the French stage. All know of Mme. Bernhardt's eccentricities; indeed, the prevalent opinion is that she does not stop at eccentricity. If one may judge by M. Huret's narrative, the latter opinion is unjust. Mme. Bernhardt is a whirlwind, if you will, both physically and psychologically; is an artist,—a French *artiste* at that . . . but one must read the book to gain a fair idea of what life means and has meant to this genius. The translation is inspiring, and the illustrations—of Mme. Bernhardt *in propria persona* and in various parts—are excellent. The introduction is by M. Edmond Rostand, author of *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

The Growth of the Constitution in the Federal Convention of 1787. By William M. Meigs.

In endeavoring to outline the scope of the present volume, brought out by J. B. Lippincott Company, we can hardly do better than glance at the sub-title: "An Effort to Trace the Origin and Development of Each Separate Clause from its First Suggestion in That Body to the Form finally Approved; containing also a *Fac-Simile* of a Heretofore Unpublished Manuscript of the First Draft of the Instrument Made for Use in the Committee of Detail." Mr. Meigs says that he has been induced to write his book because he himself, in hunting the inception and evolution of some one clause in the Constitution, has often felt the need of just such a work; it is therefore practical, above all else. The general plan is at once simple and efficient: preceding the body of the work with a General Sketch, outlining the chronology of the Constitution, Mr. Meigs takes that document clause by clause from the Preamble to the resolution providing for the government of the United States under the provisions of this document, "as soon as the conventions of nine states shall have ratified this Constitution." He has also devoted considerable space to Some Important Defeated Proposals, to a Note on the Randolph Draft (the manuscript draft now first reproduced), and to an Appendix, containing, among other matter of interest, the Virginia and New Jersey Plans, and the Report of the Committee on Style. An Index completes the work, which must inevitably interest historians, not only in this country, but abroad, as well as students of history and general readers.